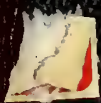


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BOSTON UNIVERSITY

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Thesis

THE AMERICAN THEATRE BEFORE THE REVOLUTION

by

Agatha Catherine Maguire

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submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

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THE AMERICAN THEATRE BEFORE THE REVOLUTION
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The American Theatre Before the Revolution.

Chapter 1. Introduction.

A. Description and Importance.

The theatre-loving American finds a fascinating appeal in drama which cannot be resisted and he is forever intrigued by the glamour associated with actors and actresses.

Any information on the theatre is always acceptable. Knowledge of our contemporary theatre is eagerly sought, but few have realized that the early days of the drama in Colonial America are also interesting and intriguing. It is therefore the purpose of this thesis to bring together the leading facts relating to the early theatre in America, with a brief account of the drama in contemporary England. The drama is a part of literature, and the history of the American Theatre is therefore a part of the history of American Literature. The growth and development of America may also be marked in the story of the theatre. The attitudes expressed by the various colonies in accepting the theatre reflects the religion and morality prevalent at the time.

America is used here to mean essentially the United States. However, in order to give a more complete outline of the development of the theatre, it has been necessary to refer to plays which were enacted in other sections of North America.

Critics have difficulty in agreeing upon the first production, but they definitely label Thomas Godfrey's "The Prince of Parthia" the first play written by an American and played professionally

in the colonies. The poetic quality, dramatic possibilities, and the intellectual and cultural background to be found in this play prove its excellence. Though other plays were written, none can claim to be its rival.

No attempt is made here to prove the truth at which to be arrived from the conflicting and oftentimes unproved statements of those who have written upon the subject. It is rather a chronological survey of the theatre and its relation to the development of the Colonies at the period previous to the Revolution.

The difficulties of reconstructing the history of the American Theatre prior to the Revolution are manifold. The many gaps and inconsistencies result from conflicting authorities. The student, in the course of his work, becomes aware of constant plagiarism, illogical conclusions, incomplete, subjective research, and unproved statements. Colonial theatrical history, while an interesting problem to the research lover, is but a probable series of events obtained from and built about the scant information available on the subject.

With the closing of the theatres by the Continental Congress the first period of the drama in America ended.

B. The English Theatre and Players.

It is necessary to examine the English stage if we are to understand its influence upon our own. In the reign of Charles I, the drama was at its lowest depth. The people as well as the nobility had become licentious, and the splendid Elizabethan plays, Shakespeare's (1) included, were considered "too tame" for their lewd tastes. The stage had become so degraded that law and religion were neglected, and everyone did much as he pleased.

Into the midst of this situation came Oliver Cromwell and the Puritan Commonwealth. Charles I was beheaded, and the theatres were (2) closed in 1642, to remain closed until the Restoration in 1660, when Charles II came to the throne. He had been in France with his followers, and here he had become acquainted with the French theatre, which was (3) closely connected with the French court. Therefore it is not surprising that the English theatre should become influenced by the things Charles (4) had seen in France.

During the Stuart dynasty, many changes took place in the theatres themselves. The structures were made larger, the buildings enclosed, and the decorations and equipments were made luxurious. A drop curtain came into use at this time, and the spectators were given (5) benches upon which to sit. Painted scenery became the vogue.

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1. Bates, Alfred, Editor: "The Drama", Vol.19."American Drama". Pro. p.1.
 2. Hubbell and Beatty: "An Introduction to Drama". p.315.
 3. Ibid.
 4. Ibid.
 5. Ibid. p.315-316.

To English noblemen, the play became "the thing". Pepys, the famous Diarist, in commenting upon Shakespeare's "Midsummer Night's Dream" and other plays, incidentally gives us the opinion of his contemporaries:

"Last night it was my misfortune to witness a play called 'A Midsummer Night's Dream', by that dull rogue Shakespeare. I hope I shall never see such a miserable play again." (1)

In his notes for October 11, 1660, he casually remarks that he has been taken to see "The Moore of Venice" at the Cockpit. On March 23, 1661, he attended a performance at the Red Bull, "where I had not been since the (2) plays came up again", but the play, "All's Lost by Lust", was so poorly done that the whole house broke into an uproar. On March 2, 1667, Pepys and his wife saw Dryden's "The Mayden Queene", of which he heartily approved. He adds that "There is a comical part done by Nell, which is Florimell, that I never can hope ever to see the like done again by man (3) or woman." Mr. Pepys' wit and cleverness in his remarks upon the English theatre of his day show a wide acquaintance with the plays and players of that period.

Gradually, the English drama rose from the depths of the Restoration, under the leadership of such men as Swift, Pope, Addison, and Steele. Among the successful plays of the period were Otway's "Venice Preserved", Addison's "Cato", Steele's "The Conscious Lovers", Congreve's "Love for Love", Farquhar's "The Recruiting Sergeant" and "The Beaux' Stratagem", Colley Cibber's "The Careless Husband", and the masterpieces

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1. Bates, Alfred, Editor: "The Drama", Vol. 19. "American Drama". Pro.p.2.
 2. "Century Readings in English Literature". p.319.
 3. Ibid. p.320.

1. The first part of the paper discusses the importance of the study and the objectives of the research. It also mentions the scope of the study and the limitations of the study.

2. The second part of the paper discusses the methodology used in the study. It includes the data collection methods and the data analysis methods.

3. The third part of the paper discusses the results of the study. It includes the findings of the study and the conclusions drawn from the study. It also mentions the implications of the study and the recommendations for future research.

4. The fourth part of the paper discusses the conclusion of the study. It includes the final findings of the study and the final conclusions drawn from the study.

5. The fifth part of the paper discusses the references used in the study. It includes the list of references and the sources of the data used in the study.

6. The sixth part of the paper discusses the appendixes used in the study. It includes the list of appendixes and the content of the appendixes.

(1)
of Dryden.

The acting of the period was of the finest. Perhaps the most outstanding stars were Nance Oldfield, Peg Woffington, Colley Cibber, and David Garrick, Discovered by Captain Farquhar, Nance Oldfield through his influence came to Drury Lane, and in 1696, Colley Cibber assigned her the role of Lady Betty Modish in his play, "The Careless Husband". For the first time in English theatrical history, the part of a lady of fashion was appropriately played. (2) It was Sir William Davenant who first allowed a woman to play professionally, when he gave Mrs. Sanderson the part of the heroine in "The Siege of Rhodes", at his theatre in Lincoln's Inn Fields. (3) Largely due to the presence of women, the public gradually refused to accept the licentiousness of earlier plays.

About the year 1725, Peg Woffington made her debut in Dublin. She was a splendid actress and a wit as well. At Drury Lane she met Garrick, with whom she is romantically connected, and who had begun his career as Richard III at Goodman's Fields. Because of his great success, he and the manager of that theatre were invited to Drury Lane. Here we find the first link with the Colonial Theatre, for Gifford's theatre had for its next manager none other than Mr. William Hallam. Drury Lane flourished, but the fame of Goodman's Fields did not bring success financially, and in 1750, the theatre here became bankrupt. Then Mr. Hallam planned the voyage which was taken by his brother Lewis, (4) the father of the Lewis Hallam whom we know as old Mr. Hallam.

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1. Hornblow, Arthur: "A History of the Theatre in America". Vol.1.p.26-27.
 2. Crawford, Mary Caroline: "The Romance of the American Theatre".p.2-3.
 3. Ibid. p.4.
 4. Dunlap, William: "A History of the American Theatre". p. 2-3.

In 1750, the drama in England showed a decided improvement. The theatre attracted many worthy playwrights and followers. The acting was of the best quality, and we are ready to see its continuance in the colonies under the planning of "the Father of the American Theatre", Mr. (1) William Hallam.

1. Ibid. p.2.

Chapter 11. Social, Economic, and Religious Conditions in the Colonies.

A. Delay in the Coming of the Drama.

When one considers the trials and tribulations which beset this country of ours in the days of its infancy, it is not surprising to find it as helpless in its literary tendencies as in more vital needs. Drama, a part of literature, had its own difficulties with which to contend, as well as the postponement of creative writing because of dependence on the mother country. There were many prejudices against the theatre, and not without cause. The reputation of the English theatre was naturally transmitted to America; some people did not believe in pleasures of this kind; and from an economical point of view, others could not understand such a waste of money to support "loose living" people.

The religious beliefs in the colonies differed. Puritan New England and Quaker Pennsylvania were inhospitable to the theatre, but welcome awaited actors in Episcopalian Virginia, South Carolina, and
(1)
Catholic Maryland. The inhabitants of these Southern colonies were accustomed to the theatre. Drama grew up under the Catholic Church, and it was as natural for its members to like it, as for the Cavalier descendants to love this pleasure of their ancestors. In the same way it was also natural for the Puritans to resent it because of their hatred of
(2)
the other arts. To them the drama was a thing to be abhorred as an agent

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1. Quinn, Arthur Hobson; "A History of the American Drama From The Beginning to the Civil War". p.1.
 2. Ibid.

of the devil. These Congregationalists were opposed to anything which would interrupt their ascetic habits, and which had been the amusement of the Cavaliers, "the enemies of their forefathers"⁽¹⁾. The Quakers were the most opposed to scenic representations, but there was a growing belief in religious toleration in Pennsylvania and it was to be expected that the growing element of Episcopalians and Catholics, and others, here, would see no harm in theatrical productions. They had seen plays in their youth, or, having read such authors as Shakespeare, desired to see them acted on the stage.⁽²⁾

To the Puritan and the Quaker the stage must have seemed of little consequence. Accustomed as they were to the deepest of thinking and the difficult practices of their religion, it would be surprising to find them sympathetic toward the theatre. The Quakers with their close association with the Spirit and the Puritans with their earnest condemnation of witchcraft could not but find worthlessness in such imitations of reality as the theatre afforded.⁽³⁾

The reasons for such opposition of the early drama are many and varied. Some believe that it concerned freedom of conscience, but the falseness of this is proved by the fact that those colonies which were tolerant in belief were intolerant of the theatre, as in Pennsylvania,⁽⁴⁾ and vice versa, as in Virginia. The Puritan and the Quaker thought too much expense was involved, and in this they were joined by the Dutch

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1. Bates, Alfred, Editor: "The Drama", Vol. 19. "American Drama". p.19.
 2. Dunlap, William: "A History of the American Theatre". p.15.
 3. Quinn, Arthur: "A History of the American Drama From the Beginning to the Civil War". p.1.
 4. Ibid.

burgher of New York. Many managers were thus led to publish their expenses and receipts, and eventually this condemnation was one of the reasons (1) for closing the theatres by the Continental Congress.

The general impression in the colonies that the theatre was the home of loose living grew out of the Restoration, about which many Puritans had heard from their ancestors. Morals had somewhat improved in the theatre since the days of Charles II, but they were by no means conventional. The standard of living was not an ordinary one, but the followers of this art did not mind as long as they were pleasantly (2) entertained.

In the various opposing colonies, laws were passed against the theatre. When city people began to be interested in plays, opposition from Puritan clergy broke forth. Their reasons were partly inherited and (3) partly their own. Act 39 of Queen Elizabeth's reign had classified unlicensed players or actors as vagabonds, but in the colonies licenses were not granted and all actors were said to be vagabonds. They believed that all forms of amusement should be prohibited, acting included. To them, no play could moralize or instruct - instead they were breeders (4) of immorality, impiety, and irreligion.

The Massachusetts Law of June 29, 1700, entitled "An Act for the Suppressing and Punishing of Rogues, Common Beggars and other Lewd, Idle and Disorderly Persons", was elaborate. It began by providing the establishment of houses of correction in every county, to which

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1. Quinn, Arthur: "A History of American Drama from the Beginning to the Civil War". p.1.
 2. Ibid. p.3.
 3. Myers, Gustavus: "Ye Olden Blue Laws". p.204.
 4. Ibid. p.206.

should be sent:

"all rogues, vagabonds and idle persons going about in any town or county begging, or persons using any subtle craft, juggling or unlawful games or plays" Etc.(1)

If convicted, the guilty would be sent to a house of correction and be severely punished.

Pennsylvania passed a similar law on the twenty-seventh of November, 1700. Because the Quakers regarded plays as too loud and noisy, they considered them likely to incite riots and disorder. Therefore their act was called "An Act against Riots, Rioters and Riotous Sports, Plays and Games." According to this law, anyone who introduced "any rude or riotous sports, as prizes, stage plays, masks, revels," etc., should pay twenty shillings, or get ten days imprisonment.

Connecticut followed the lead of Massachusetts and classified all actors as vagrants, inflicting severe upon those convicted.

As the eighteenth century advanced, plays were given more and more frequently in private, despite the laws against them. When two Englishmen and some Bostonians gave a performance of Otway's "Orphan" in a State Street Coffee-House, the ministers heard of it and took action by obtaining from the legislature, on April 11, 1750. "An Act for Preventing Stage Plays and Other Theatrical Entertainments":

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1. Myers, Gustavus: "Ye Olden Blue Laws".p.207.
 2. Ibid p.208-209.
 3. Ibid.
 4. Ibid.p.210.
 5. Ibid.p.211-212.

"For preventing and avoiding the many and great mischiefs which arise from public stage plays, interludes and other theatrical entertainments, which not only occasion great and unnecessary expense, and discourage industry and frugality, but likewise tend generally to increase immorality, impiety and contempt of religion -

"Be it enacted by the Lieut. Governor, Council and House of Representatives that from and after the publication of this act, no person or persons whosoever shall or may for hire or gain, or for any valuable consideration, let or suffer to be used and improved any house, room or place whatsoever for acting or carrying on any stage plays, interludes or other theatrical entertainments, on pain of forfeiting and paying for each and every day or time such house, room or place shall be let, used or improved, contrary to this act, twenty pounds.

"Sect. 11 - And be it further enacted that if at any time whatsoever from and after the publication of this act, any person or persons shall be present as an actor or spectator of any stage play, interlude or theatrical entertainment in any house, room or place where a greater number of persons than twenty shall be assembled together, every such person shall forfeit and pay for every time he or they shall be present as aforesaid, five pounds. The forfeiting and penalties aforesaid to be one-half to His Majesty for the use of the government, and the other half to him or them that shall inform or sue for the same, and the aforesaid forfeitures and penalties may likewise be recovered by presentment of the grand jury, in which case the whole of the forfeitures shall go to His Majesty for the use of the government." (1)

Thus it allowed wealthy people to have plays in their homes, and denied others. Popular indignation was of no use, and
(2)
the law was reenacted in 1756 and 1761. This law is especially interesting to the student who is desirous of discovering the condition of the theatre in the various colonies. It accounts for the paucity of material in Massachusetts, and clearly solves the mystery which might be in the mind of the superficial student.

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1. Crawford, Mary Caroline: "The Romance of the American Theatre". p.81-82
 2. Myers, Gustavus: "Ye Olden Blue Laws". p.213.

Pennsylvania passed another law of prevention on May 31, 1759, Rhode Island in 1761, and, in 1762, New Hampshire refused to admit a group of players to Portsmouth because plays had "a peculiar influence on the minds of young people and greatly endanger their morals (1) by giving them a taste for intriguing amusement and pleasure".

When all things are considered, it is not surprising to find the drama taking root in Virginia. A love of pleasure and gayety dominated the nature of the people. Bancroft says, "They were a continuation of English society, who were attached to the monarchy, with a deep reverence for the English church, and a love for England and English (2) institutions." They were descendants of the Cavaliers who knew and loved the theatre.

Puritan and Quaker opposition was also a natural result of the hereditary attitude toward the theatre. Restoration conditions came to their attention from their forefathers, who had migrated perhaps at that time. They added to these ideas their own prejudices, and passed laws forbidding plays and players to come to their communities. Thus when we consider the many difficulties which beset our early theatre it is surprising that it overcame so many obstacles. Its continuation and growth are due to the appreciation given it by our Southern Colonies, and by those Northerners whose spirit helped to arouse friendliness in alien colonies.

1. Hornblow, Arthur: "A History of the Theatre in America". Vol. 1. p. 24.
2. Ibid. p. 38.

Chapter 111. Earliest Production in America.

A. First Plays.

When did the American theatre begin? Many critics have asked themselves this question, but not all arrive at the same conclusion. William Dunlap and his followers insist that the first dramatic performance was at Williamsburg, Virginia, in 1752. The more scholarly men who have become interested in this field have traced the first play as far
(1)
back as 1606.

Recently an intriguing notice appeared in one of the Boston newspapers, which, if authentic, will prove of great value to the
(2)
theatrical historian. The article surprisingly informs us that:

"A translation of what is believed to be the first American play, written four centuries ago,...tells of the conversion of four Indian kings and their joining with Cortes against Montezuma, Aztec emperor. The author of the play and the exact date of its writing are not definitely known....It is attributed to Father Toribio de Motolinia, a writer of note who knew Cortes. Dr. Carlos E. Castaneda discovered the play in the Garcia collection at the University of Texas. It appears in a manuscript book bearing the date of 1619, but the supposed author declared that he found the play, along with two others, in some old school books."(3)

The article continues, declaring that the Spanish missionaries two centuries earlier used dramatic representations to aid them in their instruction of the Indians. Doctor Castaneda, who is the

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1. Quinn, Arthur: "A History of the American Drama from the Beginning to the Civil War". p.4.
 2. "The Pilot". Boston, Vol. 107, No.6.. Sat. Feb. 8, 1936.
 3. Ibid.

historiographer of the Knights of Columbus Historical Commission, is writing the history of the mission period in Texas, and he is also the discoverer of Morfi's "History of Texas", which had been lost for a century and a half. He gives the following summary of the play:

"Cortes, Marina, and the four Tlaxacalan kings are real characters, portrayed with historical accuracy. Cortes makes two long speeches in the play in which he gives a sketch of his life. In this the author reveals a personal acquaintance with a clearness, simplicity, and precision that bespeaks first hand acquaintance with the methods used by the missionaries of the earliest days.

"But aside from the accuracy, the 'Coloquio' is remarkable for its perfect proportions, the studied poise and dignity of the style, the vivid portrayal of character, and the heroic simplicity of its form and language. It deserves to be ranked with the best 'coloquios' of the sixteenth century, and it certainly should be called the first truly American play, for it was doubtlessly composed in America and is the first that has taken for its theme the most dramatic chapter of the history of North America."(1)

There are a few supposed theatrical performances in the seventeenth century. Their authenticity is, of course, a matter of dispute. Various critics have their own special beliefs as to the first truly American play, often discrediting references made by their fellow-authors, on insufficient evidence.

Perhaps the most definite of these is that referred to by
(2)
Arthur Hobson Quinn, when he cites 1606 as the date of the first theatrical performance in America. "The Theatre of Neptune", by Marc Lescarbot,
(3)
was enacted at Port Royal under the auspices of the "Ordre de Bon Temps".

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1. "The Pilot". Boston. Vol. 107, No. 6. Sat., Feb. 8, 1936.
 2. Quinn, Arthur: "A History of the American Drama from the Beginning to the Civil War." p.4.
 3. "National Encyclopedia". Pub. by P. F. Collier and Son, Corp. p.190.

The title page includes the note that it was:

"Presented upon the waves of Port Royal the fourteenth day of November, sixteen hundred and six, on the return of the Sieur de Poutrincourt from the Armouchiquois Country."

Marc Lescarbot, a young lawyer of Paris, the author, was a leading dramatist on the continent, his only rival being Captain Far Fan, whose serio-comic production was given on the banks of the Rio Grande, eight years before.⁽¹⁾ This evidence of an earlier performance is not given by any of the authorities whom I have consulted, and the writer of this does not give any reference for her statement. However, because of the nature of her work, it is not likely that she would give a false statement. Her research as evidenced by her introduction to the only known English translation of the play we are discussing is of a very scholarly nature.

"The Theatre of Neptune" welcomed Jean de Biencourt, the leader of the second expedition sent to Acadia by Sieur de Monts. The masque took place in the open air, and the action on the waves and banks before the Habitation, a frail wooden fort. The players were gentlemen and "common men" of the expedition left at the Habitation, for "2 shillings a day hire", in Lescarbot's charge.⁽²⁾

"The masque consists of the verses of Neptune, his Tritons, and the attending savages in praise of the valor of France in her sea discovery, the debt France owes to her sailor men, the courage of de Monts, and of de Poutrincourt, and the great qualities of the King."⁽³⁾

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1. Lescarbot, Marc: "The Theatre of Neptune in New France". Richardson, Harriette Tabor, Editor of English Translation. Introd. p.lX.
 2. Ibid.p.lX-X.
 3. Ibid. p.XlV.

The author further comments:

"Slight as is the literary value of this earliest drama, the clean gayety of the Masque, written far from every civilizing influence, is a rare tribute to the gentlemen of Port Royal and to their polished courage."(1)

Marc Lescarbot was born in Vervins, France, about 1570 or 1575. His family was of the lesser nobility of Picardie, and at the conference of the Peace of Vervins he came to the attention of King Henry the Great when he gave a Latin oration before the Papal Delegate at the signing of the papers which on May 31, 1598 made France and Spain friends after nine years of warfare. In 1608 he wrote his history of New France, and in 1612 he went with Pierre de Castille, ambassador of Louis XIII, to Switzerland. In 1619 he married Francoise de Valpergue in the church of Saint-Germain l'Auxerrois, and took the title of Wiencourt and Saint-Audebert. He is thought to have died in 1634. Thus the author of the English edition of the play sums up the leading facts of Lescarbot's life.

The man to whom "The Theatre of Neptune" was dedicated was Jean de Biencourt, Sieur de Poutrincourt, Marsilly-sur-Seine, Dumensil, Chantenes Vimeu and Guibermensil, Baron of Saint-Just and Port Royal, and Chevalier of the Order of the King. To this man's courage, wisdom, and leadership we owe the final establishment of New France. He kept up the spirit of New France until Champlain built Quebec.

The play itself closes with a four part song which must often have been sung by the members of the settlement:

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1. Lescarbot, Marc: "The Theatre of Neptune in New France". Richardson, Harriette Tabor, Editor of English Translation. Introd. p.XIV.
 2. Ibid. p. XV-XVI.
 3. Ibid. p. XVII.

"Give us your pledge, great God Neptune,
Against wild ocean arrogance.
And grant us all, as your high boon
That we may meet again in France."(1)

Thus the play ends which is reputed to be the first American production. Having read the play, there is no doubt in my mind as to its authenticity. If we discredit Father Motolinia's play and the one mentioned by the Editor of this play as having taken place eight years previous, "The Theatre of Neptune" is the first authentic American play.

Montrose Moses mentions "The Lost Lady" as having been
(2)
written in 1641, by Sir William Berkeley, Governor of Virginia. Cornelius Walkinson, Philip Howard, and William Darby wrote "Ye Bare and Ye Cubb", in 1665, the next date we have concerning plays. As a result of its performance they were summoned to court for the offence, and were found
(3)
"not guilty."

Even Massachusetts, with all her hide-bound prejudices,
(4)
was not a stranger to plays. According to Moses, a dancing master set up a "show" on lecture days, in 1685, asserting that "by one play he could teach more divinity than Mr. Willard or the Old Testament." The people were naturally scandalized by such a statement, and no doubt more than one person firmly believed that the player would meet with some dire punishment.

(5)

Arthur Hornblow's reference to the performance of the tragedy "Gustavus Vasa", by Benjamin Colman, in 1690, by Harvard students,

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1. Lescarbot, Marc: "The Theatre of Neptune in New France". Richardson, Harriette Tabor, Editor of English Translation. Text. p.26.
 2. Moses, Montrose J.: "The American Dramatist". p.18.
 3. Quinn, Arthur: "A History of the American Drama from the Beginning to the Civil War". p.4-5.
 4. Same as 2. p.19.
 5. Hornblow, Arthur: "A History of the American Theatre". Vol.1. p.30.

(1)
is discredited by Quinn, who, having studied the authorities from whom the statement was taken, found no truth in it. No records of this play are available in the documents of Harvard University.

In 1694, there is reference to a performance of Moliere's
(2)
"Tartuffe" in Quebec. The Church frowned upon it, says Moses, and thus we hear of its playing at this date. There is also mention of a "pastoral colloquy" in 1792, by the students of William and Mary College. It was given before the governor, and is perhaps the earliest record of college
(3)
drama.

William Aston is the first person to be given definite
(4) (5)
figuration in the history of American Drama. Quinn and Moses, perhaps the most scholarly and reliable of the writers whom I have been able to
(6)
consult, give brief mention to him. Hornblow, however, was obviously interested in this strolling player who says he acted in New York about 1702. Aston, sometimes called Mat Medley, was an Englishman by birth, and was educated as an attorney. At the end of the reign of William III, he became an actor, writing his own plays and presenting them. In "The Medley" he toured the English provinces, and in 1717 he performed in the Globe and Marlborough Taverns in London. Aston wrote a Supplement to Colley Cibber's "Apology", and is the author of "The Fool's Opera", and

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1. Quinn, Arthur: "A History of the American Drama from the Beginning to the Civil War". p.5.
 2. Moses, Montrose J.: "The American Theatre". p.19.
 3. Same as 1. p.5.
 4. Same as 1. p.5.
 5. Same as 2. p.19.
 6. Hornblow, Arthur: "A History of the Theatre in America". Vol.1.p.30-32.

other plays. The full title of this famous play is "The Fool's Opera, or the Taste of the Age. Written by Mat Medley and performed by His company in Oxford. To which is prefix'd A Sketch of the Author's Life, Written by Himself. London, (1730?)⁽¹⁾. It is in the preface of this play that we hear of Aston's voyage to America and his acting in New York. The preface says in part:

"My merry hearts, you are to know me we a gentleman, lawyer, poet, actor, soldier, sailor, excisemen, publican in England, Scotland, Ireland, New York, East and West Jersey, Maryland, Virginia (on both sides Cheesapeake), North and South Carolina, South Florida, Bahamas, Jamaica, Hispaniola, and often a coaster by all the same...After many vicissitudes I arrived at Charles Towne (Charleston, S.C.) full of lice, shame, poverty, nakedness, and hunger - turned player and poet and wrote one play on the subject of the country."⁽²⁾

After Charleston, Aston proceeded to New York by ship, the easiest mode of travel in those days. The voyage was a rough one and the ship was greatly delayed. He finally reached his destination, and his story continues:

"There I lighted on my old acquaintance, Jack Charleton. Fencing Master and Counsellor Reignieur, sometime of Lincoln's Inn (who) supply'd me with business (work) till I had the honour of being acquainted with the brave, honest, unfortunate gentleman, Capt. Henry Pullein, whose ship (The Fame) was burnt in the Bermudas, he (to the best of his ability) assisted me, so that after acting, writing, courting, fighting that winter (1702?) my kind Captain Davies, in his sloop built at Rhode, gave me free passage for Virginia."⁽³⁾

The nonchalant manner with which he announces his arrival in New York seems to indicate, Hornblow believes, that there were

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1. Hornblow, Arthur: "A History of the Theatre in America". Vol.1. p.31.
 2. Ibid.
 3. Ibid.

other actors there. If he caused a sensation, he does not seem to be such a man of modesty that he would refrain from mentioning the fact of his notoriety in the above biographical sketch. It also seems clear that there could not have been much remuneration in his "Business", or he would not have needed assistance to obtain a passage. The last we hear of this actor and "jack-of-all-adventures" is in London, where he married and was heard of no more.

Aston's play, if printed, has never been found.

(1)

"Androboras" is the first printed play, says Quinn. This, however, is false because of the existence of the play recently found in Texas by Dr. Castaneda and the play by Marc Lescarbot, to which I have referred above, and which I now possess. "Androboras, A Biographical Farce in Three Acts, viz. The Senate, The Consistory and The Apotheosis", "by Governor Hunter", was not played. It is attributed to Robert Hunter who governed New York from 1710 to 1719, the play being printed in 1714. Because Hunter was an Englishman, critics do not regard this as of any great value except historically, but from this point of view we might regard Father Motolinia's play and that of Marc Lescarbot in a less favorable light because one is evidently Spanish and the other OldFrench.

In 1714, Justice Samuel Sewall of Massachusetts revealed in one of his letters the performance of a play in the Council Chambers. He says that though the Romans enjoyed plays, they were not "so far set upon them as to turn their Senate House into a Playhouse."⁽²⁾ He further protested "Let not Christian Boston goe beyond Heathen Rome in the practice of

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1. Quinn, Arthur: "A History of the American Drama from the Beginning to the Civil War". p.6.
 2. Hornblow, Arthur: "A History of the Theatre in America". Vol. 1. p.33.

(1)
Shameful Vanities". Evidently the drama had crept so warily into Boston that it had reached the Council Chambers before the minister and foes of the theatre realized what was happening.

The search by authorities for the first American theatre has revealed none earlier than that built in 1716, at Williamsburg,
(2)
Virginia. It was erected by a William Levingston, who

"for some time previous had been managing in New Kent County a peripatetic dancing school in which the star dancers were Charles Stagg and his wife Mary. There is a contract recorded at Yorktown, dated July 11, 1716, by which William Levingston, merchant, agrees with Charles and Mary Stagg, his wife, actors, to build a theatre at Williamsburg and to provide actors, scenery, and music out of England for the enacting of comedies and tragedies in the said city. On November 21, 1716, Mr. Levingston purchased three and one-half acre lots and erected thereon a dwelling house, kitchen, and stable. He laid out also a bowling alley and built a theatre."(3)

We have no records of the plays presented. After a few years the theatre
(4)
failed and the mortgagee took over the property. The theatre itself was probably rudely constructed and served many public purposes, as well as the theatre.

A theatre which flourished in New York in 1732 was discovered by Charles P. Daly, in an advertisement which read:

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1. Moses, Montrose J.: "The American Dramatist". p.25.
 2. Quinn, Arthur: "A History of American Drama from the Beginning to the Civil War". p.6.
 3. Hornblow, Arthur: "A History of the Theatre in America." Vol. 1. p.34-35. From Dr. Tyler's "Williamsburg, the Old Virginia Capital".
 4. Same as 3. p.36.

"To be Sold at Reasonable Rates, all sorts of Household Goods, viz. Beds, Chairs, Tables, Chests of Drawers, Looking Glasses, Andirons and Pictures, as also several sorts of Druggs and Medicines, also a Negro Girl about 16 years, has had the small-pox and is fit for Town or Country. Enquire of George Talbot, next Door to the Play-House."(1)

This is probably the same theatre which had opened on December 6, 1732,
(2)

with Farquhar's "The Recruiting Officer". The building belonged to the
(3)

Honorable Rip Van Dam, then acting mayor. One author, however, says that
(4)

later investigation proved that the theatre mentioned above referred to a puppet show. Other writers agree that it is the same theatre, taking their proof from the following advertisement:

"On the 6th instant, the New Theatre in the building of the Hon. Rip Van Dam, Esq., was opened with the comedy of "The Recruiting Officer", the part of Worthy acted by the ingenious Mr. Thomas Heady, barber and Peruque maker to his Honour."(5)

The barbers of the day must have held a place of esteem, as we see by the mention of Mr. Heady. He must also have been a talented man to practice two professions. It is a proof that this was an amateur, not a professional performance.

The mingling of amateurs and professionals is further exemplified by an advertisement in a South Carolina paper, which reads:

"Any persons desirous of having a share in the Performance thereof, upon Application to Mr. Shepheard, shall receive a satisfactory answer."(6)

1. Crawford, Mary Caroline: "The Romance of the American Theatre". From the "New York Gazette" for October 15, 1733 p.20.
2. Ibid. From "The New England and Boston Gazette" for January 1, 1733.
3. Hornblow, Arthur: "A History of the Theatre in America". Vol.1. p.42.
4. Bates, Alfred, Editor: "The Drama". Vol. 19. "American Drama". p.16-17.
5. Same as 3. p.42.
6. Quinn, Arthur: "A Hist. of the Am. Drama from the Beginning to the Civil War." From the "South Carolina Gazette", May 3, 1735. p.8.

This notice refers to the group of actors who gave a performance of "The Orphan", by Thomas Otway, in the courtroom at Charleston, and later, on the eighteenth of February gave the first advertised opera in America, (1)
 "Flora or Hob in the Well." The result of the troupe's success brought about the erection of a theatre. Quoting again from the "South Carolina Gazette", for January 24, 1736, we learn:

"On Thursday, the 12th of February will be opened the New Theatre in Dock Street, in which will be performed the comedy called "The Recruiting Officer". Tickets for the pilt and boxes will be delievered at Mr. Charles Shepheard's on Thursday, the 5th of February. Boxes 30s. Pitt 20s. and tickets for the gallery 15s. which will be delivered at the theatre the day of playing."(2)

We find no reference in the "Gazette" of the opening performance, but on January 23, Otway's "Orphan" is advertised, and later (3)
 "The Recruiting Officer" and "George Barnwell". The season closed with the popular "Orphan", on March 23, 1736. The issue of May 23 contains the following lament which is evidently the result of the trouble which (4)
 had befallen the theatre:

"On The Sale of the Theatre".

"How cruel Fortune, and how feeble, too,
 To crop the Method made for making you!
 Changes tho' common, yet when great they prove,
 Make men distrust the care of Mighty Jove.
 Half made in thought (though not in fact) we find
 You bought and sold, but left poor H. behind.
 P.S.-Since so it is ne'er mind the silly trick.
 The pair will please, when Pierrot makes you sick."

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1. Quinn, Arthur: "A History of the American Drama from the Beginning to the Present Time". From "Early Opera in America", by O.G.Sonneck. p.8.
 2. Ibid.
 3. Hornblow, Arthur: "A History of the Theatre in America". Vol.1. p.51.
 4. Ibid.

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Whether this is a jest or is half serious in its intent, it denotes a whimsical dismay at the misfortune which had descended upon the group. One wonders if such a plea aided the regaining of their success in any way.

The "Virginia Gazette" of September 10, 1736 contained a notice of interest to theatre-goers:

"This evening will be performed at the Theatre by the Young Gentlemen of the College, the Tragedy of 'Cato', and on Monday, Wednesday and Friday next will be acted the following Comedies by the Young Gentlemen and Ladies of the Country--'The Busybody' and 'The Recruiting Officer' and 'The Beaux Stratagem'."(1)

From the evidence of such advertisements as this and the
(2)
one in the "New England and Boston Gazette" quoted above, it is quite clear that there was an intermingling of amateur and professional performers. This is further proved by the correspondence of the day. Colonel Thomas
(3)
Jones wrote to his wife on September 17, 1736:

"You may tell Betty Pratt there has been but two plays acted since she went, which is 'Cato', by the Young Gentlemen of the College, as they call themselves, and 'The Busybody', by the Company on Wednesday night last, and I believe there will be another to Night..."

Colonel William Byrd wrote to Sir John Randolph of Williamsburg about the reception of "The Busybody", there, which he seemed to know well:

"Which of your actors shone most in the play, next Isabinda who, I take it for granted, is the Oldfield of the Theatre? How came Squire Marplot off? With

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1. Quinn, Arthur: "A History of the American Drama from the Beginning to the Civil War". p.7.
 2. Crawford, Mary Caroline: "The Romance of the American Theatre". p.20.
 3. Hornblow, Arthur: "A History of the Theatre in America". Vol.1. p.37-38.
From "Colonial Virginia, Its People and Customs", by Mary Newton Standard

many a clap I suppose, though I fancy he would have acted more to the life in the comedy called "The Sham Doctor". But not a word of this for fear in case of sickness he might poison you."(1)

The role of Marplot was evidently taken by Sir Jon's physician. This is similar to the part taken by the Mayor of New York's barber, and is another link in the chain of evidence for the amateur theory.

After 1736, the Williamsburg theatre faded into oblivion
(2)
until it was sold to the people of the city for a town hall. We do not hear of any performance in the theatre until 1749, when the Murray and Kean players appeared in Philadelphia.

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1. Hornblow, Arthur: "A History of the Theatre in America". Vol.1.p.38.
From the "Va. Mag. Hist. Biog." 240, 241.
 2. Ibid. p.40.

B. The Murray and Kean Company and Their Repertoire.

The first organized company of actors of which we have any knowledge appeared in Philadelphia in August , 1749. It was under the direction of Thomas Kean and Walter Murray. Authorities differ in regard to the importance of their performance. Seilhamer insists that dramatic history began with them, and Dunlap says they were amateurs. He refers to them:

" As early as 1749, it is on record that the magistracy of the city has been disturbed by some idle young men perpetrating the murder of sundry plays in the skirts of the town, but the culprits had been arrested and bound over to their good behavior, after confessing their crime and promising to spare the poor poets for the future."(3)

Their organization was probably comprised of English actors from the West Indies. They may have been the band of thespians whom John Moody is said to have taken to America from London three years before the arrival of the Hallams. Mr. Moody, an actor in Drury Lane, was originally a barber. His theatrical ambitions to be a tragedian were not realized because his brogue made him popular in Irish parts. Thus when he was frustrated in London he went to the West Indies about 1745. Here he found amateur performances being given, and he consulted them about plans for a theatre, with a company which he would obtain in England. The venture was so successful that he was a wealthy man within four years.

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1. Quinn, Arthur: "A History of American Drama from the Beginning to the Civil War". p.8.
 2. Crawford, Mary Caroline: "The Romance of the American Theatre". p.20-21.
 3. Dunlap, William: "A History of the American Theatre". p.17.
 4. Hornblow, Arthur: "A History of the Theatre in America". Vol.1.p.55.

Because of illness and various other reasons, it was now necessary to enlarge his company, and he returned to England for that purpose. There he was persuaded to return to the stage by Garrick. Moody sold his interests to the company he had gathered, the most important of whom were Messrs. Douglass, Kershaw, Smith, Daniels, Morris, and their wives, and a Miss Hamilton. This group reached Jamaica in 1751, and John Bernard, in his "Early Days of the American Stage", says that they were "the first dramatic company" to cross the Atlantic" of which there exists any personal record".⁽¹⁾

The first play by the Murray and Kean group was Addison's "Cato", produced in a warehouse belonging to William Plumstead. In the manuscript diary of John Smith, the son-in-law of William Penn, was an entry for August 22, 1749 which pertained to this performance:⁽²⁾

"6 mo. (August) 22.3 Jos. Morris & I happened in at Peacock Biggers, & drank Tea there & his daughter being one of the Company who were going to hear the Tragedy of Cato Acted It Occasioned some Conversation in w'ch I expressed my sorrow that anything of the kind was encouraged."(3)

In February, 1750, the same company arrived in New York. They asked the governor for permission to act in his state, and it was evidently granted. A notice appeared, attributed by Hornblow to the "New York Weekly Postboy" for February 26, 1750, and by Quinn to the Pennsylvania Gazette" of March 6, 1750, No. 1108,p.8:⁽⁴⁾⁽⁵⁾

1. Hornblow, Arthur: "A History of the Theatre in America". Vol.1.p.55-56.
2. Quinn,Arthur: "A History of the American Drama from the Beginning to the Civil War." p.8-9.
3. Ibid. p.9. From "Annals of Philadelphia and Pennsylvania", 1,471, by John F.Watson.
4. Same as 1. p.57.
5. Same as 2. p.9.

"New York, February 26.

"Last week arrived here a company of comedians from Philadelphia, who, we hear, have taken a convenient room for their purpose in one of the buildings lately belonging to the Hon. Rip Van Dam, Esq., deceased, in Nassau Street; where they intend to perform as long as the season lasts, provided they meet with suitable encouragement."(1)

It is evident that the Philadelphia paper copied this article as a note of interest for theatre lovers who attended their performances. The theatre secured is believed to be the one used for the performance of "The Recruiting Officer", which opened on December 6, 1732.⁽²⁾

The Company, with Murray and Kean as joint-managers, was comprised of Messrs. Jago, Scott, Moore, Tremain, Master Dickky Murray, the manager's son, and Mrs. Nancy George, Mrs. Taylor, Mrs. Leigh, Mrs.⁽³⁾ and Miss Osborne. Theatrical history says very little about Thomas Kean. Tradition says he was originally a writer who temporarily went on the stage because when he took a benefit at the close of the New York theatrical season in 1751 it was to leave the stage for his former profession as a writer. He must have been an actor of some talent, because his first New York role that of Richard III in Shakespeare's play of the same name,⁽⁴⁾ was done so well that it played two weeks to a crowded house. It was⁽⁵⁾ probably the first Shakespearean play to be acted in America. The bill for⁽⁶⁾ this appeared in the "Postboy":

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1. Quinn, Arthur: "A History of the American Drama from the Beginning to the Civil War." p.9.
 2. Crawford, Mary Caroline: "The Romance of the American Theatre". p.20.
 3. Hornblow, Arthur: "A History of the Theatre in America." Vol.1. p.58.
 4. Ibid. p.59.
 5. Same as 2. p.21.
 6. Same as 3. p.58. From the New York Weekly Postboy". Feb. 26, 1750.

"By his Excellency's Permission
at the Theatre in Nassau Street.
On Monday the 5th day of March next
will be presented The Historical Tragedy of
"King Richard III"

Wrote originally by Shakespeare
and altered by Colley Cibber, Esq.

In this play is contained The Death of King Henry 6th, the
artful acquisition of the Crown by King Richard, the Murder of
the Princes in the Tower. The Landing of the Earl of Richmond
and the Battle of Bosworth Field.

Tickets will be ready to be delivered by Thursday next, and
to be had of the Printer thereof.

Pitt 5/. Gallery 3/.

To begin precisely at half an hour after 6 o'clock and no
Person to be admitted behind the Scenes."

(1)

During their New York season their repertoire included "Richard III",
Otway's "Orphan", Dryden's "Spanish Friar", Farquhar's "Sir Harry Wildair",
"The Recruiting Officer", "Beaux Stratagem", "George Barnwell", "The
Beggars' Opera", "The Distressed Mother", Congreve's "Love for Love",
and Mrs. Centlivre's "A Bold Stroke for a Wife". The farces included
"The Beau in the Suds", "The Mock Doctor" (probably the same play men-
tioned in Colonel William Byrd's letter to Sir John Randolph), "The Devil
to Pay", "The Walking Statue", "The Old Man Taught Wisdom", "Damon and
Phyllida", "Hob in the Well", and "Miss in Her Teens". The company gave
two performances a week, closing with a series of benefits, when the com-
pany departed for Williamsburg, Virginia.

(2)

(3)

The origin of theatrical benefits is given in a footnote
by Hornblow. Colley Cibber explains it in his "Apology":

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1. Hornblow, Arthur: "A History of the Theatre in America." Vol.1.p.58.
From the "New York Weekly Postboy", Feb. 26, 1750.
 2. Ibid. p.38.
 3. Ibid. p.59.

"During the reign of King Charles (Charles II) an actor's benefit had never been heard of. The first indulgence of this kind was given to Mrs. Barry in King James' time, in consideration of the extraordinary applause that had followed her performance. But there his favor rested, to her alone, till after the diversion of the only company in 1695, at which time the patentees were soon reduced to pay their actor's half in good words and half in ready money. In this precarious condition some particular actors (however binding their agreements might be) were too poor or too wise to go to law with a lawyer, and therefore chose to compound their arrears, for their being admitted to the chance of having them made up by the profits of a benefit play. This expedient had its consequence: that the patentees, tho' their daily audiences might and did sometimes mend, still kept short subsistence of their actors at a stand, and grew more steady in their resolution so to keep them, as they found them less apt to mutiny while their hopes of being cleared off by a benefit was depending. In a year or two these benefits grew so advantageous that they became at last the chief article in every actor's agreement."

This account throws a very interesting light upon the frequent references to benefits given in our early theatre for various actors and actresses, who had become either impecunious or desired to retire from the stage.

(1)

Odd reasons were given for these benefits. Mrs. Davis, a member of the Murray-Kean Company desired to "buy off her time". She had evidently booked passage for New York with the understanding that she would be sold to whomever would pay her passage money. It was the custom of the period for ship-masters to agree to this, and those who were sold were called "Redemptioners". Mr. Jago said he "humbly hopes that all ladies and gentlemen will be so kind as to favour him with their company, as he never had a benefit before, and is just out of prison". The Widow Osborne's

(2)

announcement was as follows:

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1. Hornblow, Arthur: "A History of the Theatre in America". Vol.1.p.61-62.
 2. Ibid. p.62.

"On Monday next will be presented for the Benefit of the Widow Osborne 'The Distressed Mother', with several Entertainments to which will be added 'The Beau in the Suds'. As 'tis the first time this poor widow has had a benefit, and having met with divers late Harships and Misfortunes, 'tis hoped all Charitable, Benevolent, Ladies and others will favour her with their company."

Mr. Kean's own benefit was to be "Richard III, but for some unknown reason he changed his mind. In the "Postboy" for April 20, (1) 1751, the following note appeared:

"By advice of his friends, Mr. Kean causes to be presented this evening, for his Benefit, a Comedy called 'The Busybody', with singing by Mr. Woodham, particularly the celebrated Ode called 'Britain's Charter'.

"As this will positively be the last time of Mr. Kean's appearing on the stage, he honestly hopes all Gentlemen, Ladies, and others, who are his Well-wishers, will be so kind as to favour him with their Company. Tickets to be had at the Theatre, and at the New Printing Office in Bever Street."

Nevertheless, Kean did not leave the stage. Wherever the Company went, he continued to be its head.

When the season finally finished in New York, the Company joined Kean at Williamsburg, where he had obviously gone after his benefit to prepare for their coming. The managers now added a third partner, a (2) Mr. Woodham, a New York actor. The "Virginia Gazette" announced:

"By permission of His Honour the President (of the Council, who was acting Governor), whereas the Company of Comedians that are in New York intend performing in this city, but there being no Room suitable for a Play-House, 'tis propos'd that a Theatre shall be built by way of Subscription, each Subscriber advancing a Pistole to be entitled to a Box

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1. Hornblow, Arthur: "A History of the Theatre in America". Vol.1.p.62
 2. Ibid p.75-76

Ticket for the first Nights' Diversion.

"Those Gentlemen and Ladies who are kind enough to favour this undertaking are desired to send their Subscription Money to Mr. Finnie's at the Raleigh, where Tickets may be had.

"N.B. The House to be completed by October Court."

Its opening was announced in the "Gazette" for October 21,

(1)

1751:

"On Monday a Company of Comedians opened at the New Theatre near the capital in Williamsburg with 'King Richard III' and a tragic dance composed by Monsieur Denoir called 'The Royal Captive'."

Their stay in Williamsburg was short, the town being too small to warrant a large enough attendance for a long performance, and their departure was announced:

"The Company of Comedians intend to be at Petersburg by the middle of next month and hope that the Gentlemen and Ladies who are Lovers of Theatrical Entertainment will favour them with their company."(2)

At this time the Widow Osborne, Mr. Leigh and Mr. Tremain left the organization, and the company went to Norfolk for the winter, to return to Williamsburg in the spring, as is evinced by the "Gazette" of April 17, 1752: (3)

"By Permission of his Honour the Governor
At the New Theatre in Williamsburg
For the Benefit of Mrs. Beccely.
On Friday being the 24th of this Inst
Will be performed a comedy called the
'Constant Couple'

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1. Hornblow, Arthur: "A History of the Theatre in America". Vol.1.p.76.
 2. Ibid. p.77.
 3. Ibid. p.77.

or a
 'Trip to the Jubilee'
 The part of Sir Harry Wildair will be performed
 by Mr. Kean
 Colonel Standard
 by Mr. Murray
 and the part of Angelica to be performed
 by Mrs. Becceley
 With Entertainment of Singing between the Acts."

Mr. Hornblow, the author most interested in the history of
 this company, says they were at Tappahannock from the tenth of May to the
 (1)
 twenty-fourth, and were in Williamsburg during the "June Fair". With the
 arrival of the Hallams in June, 1752, the troupe of Messrs. Murray, Kean,
 (2)
 and Woodham left for Maryland.

Calling themselves the "Company of Comedians from Virgin-
 ia", the group opened at Annapolis on the eighteenth of June, 1752, with
 "The Beggar's Opera" and "The Lying Valet". The "Maryland Gazette"
 (3)
 announced:

"By Permission of his Honour the President
 At the New Theatre in Annapolis
 By the Company of Comedians
 On Monday next, being the 13th of this inst. July
 1752, will be performed a comedy called,
 'The Beaux Stratagem'.
 Likewise a farce called
 'The Virgin Unmasked'.
 To begin Precisely at 7 o'clock
 Tickets: Box 10 shillings, Pit 7 and 6 pence, gallery 5/"

In the company at this time were Messrs. Kean, Murray, Scott, and Miss

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1. Hornblow, Arthur: "A History of the Theatre in America." Vol.1.p.77.
 2. Ibid. p.78.
 3. Ibid. p.78.

Osborne, Mr. Ryanson, and Wynell and Herbert. The two last mentioned later joined the Hallams. (1) The discrepancies in the work of the historians of the theatre are exemplified clearly in the accounts of these performances at Annapolis. (2) Dunlap quotes the "Maryland Gazette" of June 19, 1828, as his authority for saying that the Hall Company played here sometime during their arrival and their first performance. The same play-bill is made use of, and he apologizes for the scarcity of names he can give, mentioning only Mr. Wynel, Mr. Herbert, and Mr. Eyarson. In a previous instance he mentioned the first two gentlemen as being members of the original Hallam Company when they sailed from London. Mr. Hornblow attributes the entire incident to the Murray-Kean troupe, and insists that the two in question joined the Hallams later.

Which authority can be quoted with any degree of accuracy? The importance of the performance is evident. From the evidence presented by these two men and their followers, it is likely that the theory of Mr. Hornblow is the more correct, because Mr. Dunlap qualifies his statement by casting a doubt upon it with the announcement that he cannot quite understand why Lewis Hallam, Junior, said nothing to him concerning the event. This would seem to indicate that either the two men joined the rival troupe for a time, or that they had never belonged to the original company. Another possibility is that there may have been an error in the names given by Hornblow, but this does not seem likely.

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1. Hornblow, Arthur: "A History of the Theatre in America". Vol.1.p.78-79.
 2. Dunlap, William: "A History of the American Theatre". p.11-12.

2. The second part of the document focuses on the financial aspects of the organization. It provides a detailed breakdown of the budget, including income and expenses, and discusses the strategies used to manage the funds effectively. This section also includes a comparison of the current financial state with previous years, highlighting any significant changes or trends.

3. The third part of the document addresses the operational aspects of the organization. It describes the various departments and their functions, as well as the processes used to coordinate and execute tasks. This section also discusses the challenges faced by the organization and the steps taken to overcome them, ensuring that the organization remains efficient and effective.

4. The fourth part of the document discusses the future plans and goals of the organization. It outlines the strategic vision and the specific objectives that the organization aims to achieve in the coming years. This section also includes a discussion of the resources needed to implement these plans and the steps that will be taken to ensure their successful execution.

5. The fifth part of the document provides a summary of the key findings and conclusions of the report. It highlights the main points discussed in the previous sections and provides a clear and concise overview of the organization's current state and future prospects. This section also includes a list of recommendations for further action, based on the findings of the report.

The publicity managers of this company were wise to the value of a reputation, and so constantly changed the name of the group as it moved from one section of the country to another, calling themselves the "Philadelphia Company" when they went to New York, the "New York Company" when in Williamsburg, etc. The organization remained intact for twenty years, changing the name in this manner as it went from place to place.
(1)

We have seen the history of theatrical performances up to the coming of the Hallam family from London, and have discussed the constant discrediting of important statements by the various critics. The many discrepancies in references, the constant plagiarism, and the failure to give adequate reasons for statements make it difficult to obtain, with a degree of accuracy, a reliable history of the early theatre. Many writers mention few or none of the plays to which I have referred here. The difficulty of obtaining information has been great because of the paucity of material, and it has therefore been necessary to give frequent quotations from the periodicals of the time to provide the best authorities for the statements made.

The treatment of these plays has been chronological because a history as complicated and as uncertain as that of the colonial theatre should be traced gradually in order to reveal its growth and development in the various colonies which accepted or rejected it.

With the coming of the London Company, critics are more unanimous in their references. There can be no doubt of the identity

1. Hornblow, Arthur: "A History of the Theatre in America". Vol.1.p.79.

of the Hallams, and though some writers deal more fully and with more interest with them than others, the essential statements show but slight discrepancies.

Chapter 1V. The American Company Under the Hallams.

A. The Preparations and Business Arrangements.

The coming of the Hallams to America is an event of great importance in theatrical history. They may not have been the first professional players to appear in this country, but the quality and quantity of their repertoire, and the general excellence of their organization gave real impetus to the permanence of our theatre.

The family of Hallams is but vaguely referred to in theatrical annals. The writers who have been consulted vary greatly in the amount of space given them. A compilation from the books made use of give us a brief history of the family. The genealogy is traced to Adam Hallam, an actor of average ability who played in Covent Garden. Four of his sons were actors - William, Lewis, George, and Thomas. The fifth was a naval officer. Thomas was accidently killed by the celebrated actor, Charles Macklin, the first great impersonator of Shylock, and the author of "The Man of the World".

William, whom Dunlap calls the Father of the American Stage, is more famous as a manager than as an actor. Lewis joined his brother's company at Goodman's Fields as an actor, where he was first low comedian.

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1. Hornblow, Arthur: "A History of the Theatre in America". Vol.1.p.70-71.
 2. Bates, Alfred, Editor: "The Drama". Vol.19. "American Drama". p.6.
 3. Dunlap, William: "The History of the American Theatre". p.18.
 4. Same as 2.



With the exception of Arthur Quinn, who places William as
(1)
the manager of the Wells Theatre in Lemon Street, London, critics seem to
agree that he was manager of Goodman's Inn Fields after Garrick left with
(2)
his manager for Drury Lane. In 1750, he became bankrupt and his debts
came to £ 5,000. His creditors acknowledged his fairness by allowing
(3)
him to keep the wardrobe and other theatrical property. Thus he had in his
possession the means to continue his business.

It was then that he thought of a new territory across the
Atlantic for his enterprise. With little to lose and everything to gain,
William went ahead with his plans, and decided that Cavalier Virginia
would be the most favorable colony in which to first try these plans.
Lewis was consulted, and he and his wife gave their consent. Immediately
a company was enlisted and met to decide the repertoire to be used and the
(4)
parts to be taken.

(5)

Robert Upton was made publicity agent, and was sent to
America to prepare the way for the London thespians. Once there, however,
he deserted his business and joined a company already there, perhaps the
Murray-Kean troupe, although Hornblow is the only author found who suggests
this.

For a year William waited in vain for his envoy to return
or to send word, and he at last decided to execute his plans. Lewis was
made manager of the company, with William, at home, as "viceroy".

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1. Quinn, Arthur: "A History of American Drama from the Beginning to the Present Time." p.10.
 2. Dunlap, William: "The History of the American Theatre". p.2-3
 3. Bates, Alfred, Editor: "The Drama". Vol.19. "American Drama". p.7.
 4. Ibid.
 5. Hornblow, Arthur: "A History of the Theatre in America". Vol.1.p.66.



Profits were to be equally divided between the brothers, after the expenses and shares had been paid.⁽¹⁾

Mr. Dunlap names the people who came to America in the "Charming Sally":⁽²⁾

"He (Lewis) and his wife were the principals, Rigby played the leading parts in tragedy and comedy, the names of the rest being Mrs. Rigby, Mr. and Mrs. Clarkson, Miss Palmer, Singleton, Herbert, Winnell, or Wynel, Adcock and Malone".

Lewis's son, Lewis Junior, known to such contemporary theatre men as William Dunlap as "Old Hallam", gave an account of his journey to this eminent chronicler.⁽³⁾ When the project was conceived, he was a boy of twelve, attending grammar school at Cambridge. Given the choice of remaining there or going with his parents to America, it is not surprising that he decided in favor of the latter. A younger son, Adam, and Miss Hallam, a daughter, also crossed with the company. A girl of six remained behind with William, and she later became famous on the stage as Mrs. Mattocks.

Some of the dramas which the company prepared for their new venture are given by Dunlap.⁽⁴⁾ They include "The Merchant of Venice", "The Fair Penitent", "The Beaux Stratagem", "Jane Shore", "The Recruiting Officer", "King Richard III", "The Careless Husband", "The Constant Couple", "Hamlet", "Theodosius", "The Provoked Husband", "Tamerlane", "The Inconstant", "Woman's A Riddle", "The Suspicious Husband", "The Conscious Lovers", "George Barnwell", "The Committee", and "The Twin Rivals".

These plays were the best of those delighting the British audiences at

1. Ibid. p.7.

2. Dunlap, William : "The History of the American Theatre". p.4.

3. Ibid. p.5.

4. Ibid. p.5.



this time. Among the farces studied were "Lethe", "The Lying Valet", "The Mock Doctor", and "The Anatomist". Only one pantomime was included, called "Harlequine Collector, or The Miller Deceived."

Business arrangements for the company were made before embarking on the "Charming Sally". It was to be a sharing corporation and continued so until after the Revolution. To quote Dunlap, from whom the
(1)
other writers seem to have taken their information, we learn:

"These profits were to be the residue and remainder, after deducting the shares, for this was what is known among players as a sharing company or scheme,---In such schemes the manager has one or more shares as reward for the trouble of governing; one or more shares pay him for the use, wear, and tear of the property; one or more shares according to his ability as an actor; and he generally avails himself of the power which rests with him of casting plays so as to keep up his reputation by appropriating the best or most popular parts for himself. The remaining shares, after the manager is satisfied, are divided among the members of the commonwealth according to ability, reputation in the profession, or the influence obtained by becoming favorites with the public."

As time passed, performers of importance were made partners and the number of shares was decreased. Weekly salaries were given actors until the present system of payment was established, in which the owner
(2)
or company are lessees, and the stage manager and performers are hired.

At the beginning, the number of shares in the American Company was eighteen. Including the manager, there were twelve adult performers, each to have one share, Mr. Hallam two as actor and manager, one for his children, and four for the property. These four were no doubt

1. Dunlap, William: "The History of the American Theatre". p.5-6.
2. Bates, Alfred, Editor: "The Drama". Vol. 19. "American Drama". p.9.

the profits which were to be divided between William and Lewis, according
(1)
to their agreement.

William Hallam's name will ever remain famous as the first theatrical manager to so organize and equip a company for such a daring enterprise. The plays prepared were London favorites, the best the season afforded. The presence of such a company gave the long-awaited public recognition for the development of the drama in the New World. The superiority of the talent and variety of repertoire were important factors in the general excellence of the American Company under the Hallams. To them the theatre in America owes a great debt.

1. Dunlap, William: "The History of the American Theatre". p.6.

B. The Hallams in America.

Early in May, 1752, the company of London thespians, under the joint managership of William and Lewis Hallam, set sail in the "Charming Sally", perhaps named for that delightful and immortal maiden, "Sally in our Alley"⁽¹⁾. After a voyage of six weeks, under the guidance of Captain Lee,⁽²⁾ the actors arrived at Yorktown, Virginia.

The plays which had been selected and cast in London were frequently rehearsed on the deck of the "Charming Sally". The players regarded with great importance their first performance, and spent many hours of practice on the plays to be given on that occasion. Because they all were together for such a long period, the uniformity of their rehearsals must have given a polish and precision to their repertoire which it would not otherwise have had.

The year following the arrival of the company, George Washington was sent by Governor Dinwiddie to the Ohio Territory to receive the surrender of the French forts to the English. It is therefore quite probable that the Father of our Country witnessed these first performances⁽³⁾ in Virginia.

From Yorktown, the company went immediately to the capitol of Virginia, then at Williamsburg, and made application to Governor Dinwiddie for permission to act in the territory under his jurisdiction. Excitement prevailed there because of the announcement in the "Gazette" which read:

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1. Carey, Henry: lived from 1700 to 1743. Light gift for doggeral satire.
 2. Dunlap, William: "The History of the American Theatre". p.6.
 3. Ibid. p.6-7.

"This is to inform the Public that Mr. Hallam, from the New Theatre in Goodmansfield, London, is daily expected here with a select Company of Comedians; the Scenes, Cloaths, and Decorations are entirely new, extremely rich and finished in the highest taste; the Scenes, being painted by the best Hands in London, are excelled by none in Beauty and Elegance, so that the Ladies and Gentlemen may depend on being entertain'd in as polite a manner as at the Theatres in London, the Company being perfect in all the best Plays, Operas, Farces and Pantomines that have been exhibited in any of the Theatres these ten years past."(1)

The only information concerning the visit of the actors to Williamsburg is derived from items appearing in the periodicals of the day. It is therefore necessary to quote from them in order to reconstruct the events in the history of the London Company's visit to America. The issue of August 21, 1752, contained the announcement:

"The Company lately from London have altered the Play-House to a regular theatre fit for the reception of Ladies and Gentlemen and the execution of their own performance, and will open on the first Friday in September with a play called "The Merchant of Venice", written by Shakespeare. Ladies engaging seats in the boxes are advised to send their servants early on the day of the performance to hold them and prevent trouble and disappointment."(2)

The theatre mentioned is the one used by the Murray-Kean players the year (3) before. When Lewis Hallam came to the capitol he "obtained from Finnie a transfer of the lots on which the theatre stood and altered it at great (4) expense into a regular theatre."

Mr. Hornblow cites September fifteenth as the occasion of

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1. Hornblow, Arthur: "A History of the Theatre in America". Vol.1.p.80.
 2. Ibid. p.80-81-82.
 3. Ibid. p.81.
 4. Ibid. p.31.

their opening performance, while Mr. Dunlap adheres to the probable date mentioned in the above advertisement, September fifth. The bill of that opening given by the "Gazette" is as follows:

"By permission of the Hon. Robert Dinwiddie, Esq., His
Majesty's Lieutenant Governor and Commander in
Chief of the Colony and Dominion of Virginia
By a Company of Comedians from London
At the Theatre in Williamsburg

On Friday next, being the 15th of September, will be
presented a Play Call'd

"The Merchant of Venice"

(Written by Shakespeare)

The part of Antonio (the Merchant) to be perform'd

By Mr. Clarkson.

Gratiano, by Mr. Singleton.

Lorenzo (with songs in character) by Mr. Adcock.

The Part of Bassanio to be perform'd by Mr. Rigby.

Duke, by Mr. Wynell.

Salanio, by Mr. Herbert.

The Part of Launcelot by Mr. Hallam.

And the Part of Shylock (the Jew) to be perform'd by
Mr. Malone.

The Part of Nerissa by Mrs. Adcock,

Jessica, by Mrs. Rigby.

And the Part of Portia to be perform'd by Mrs. Hallam.

With a new occasional Prologue.

To which will be added a Farce, call'd

"The Anatomist"

or

"Sham Doctor".

The Part of Monsieur le Medecin by Mrs. Adcock.

No Persons whatsoever to be admitted behind the Scenes, Boxes, 7s.6d.

Pit and Balconies, 5s.9d. Gallery 3s.9d. To begin at Six O'Clock.

Vivat Rex!"(1)

An orchestra had not been planned, and is not mentioned in the program. A professor of music resided in the town, however, and he was engaged to represent the wind and stringed instruments of an orchestra with his harpsichord.
(2)

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1. Hornblow, Arthur: "A History of the Theatre in America". Vol.1.p.82
 2. Bates, Alfred, Editor: "The Drama". Vol.19. "American Drama". p.11-12.

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO
DIVISION OF THE PHYSICAL SCIENCES
DEPARTMENT OF CHEMISTRY

REPORT OF THE
COMMISSIONER OF THE
BUREAU OF CHEMISTRY
FOR THE YEAR 1907
CONTAINING
A SUMMARY OF THE
WORK OF THE BUREAU
DURING THE YEAR
AND A LIST OF THE
PUBLICATIONS OF THE
BUREAU FOR THE YEAR
1907

CHICAGO: THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO PRESS
1908

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CHICAGO, ILL.

The "Gazette" a week later published a brief account of this first performance:

"On Friday last the company of Comedians from England opened the theatre in this city, when "The Merchant of Venice" and "The Anatomist" were performed, before a numerous and polite audience with great Applause."(1)

In the same number appeared the publication of the first Prologue in America a week after its delivery in the Williamsburg theatre:

"O For the tuneful Voice of Eloquence,
Whose Numbers flow with Harmony and Sense,
That I may soar above the common Wing,
In lively strains the grateful Subject sing;
To celebrate the laurel'd Poet's Fame,
And thro' the world the Stage's Use proclaim.
To charm the Fancy, and delight the Soul,
To deal Instruction, without harsh Controul,
To cultivate (by pleasing Arts) the Mind,
To win the Reason, and with Wit refin'd
To check each error and reform Mankind.
For this the Bard, on Athen's Infant Stage,
At first produc'd the Drama's artful Page;
At once to please and Satyrize he knew,
And all his Characters from Nature drew;
Without Restriction then, as Nature taught,
The Player acted, and the Poet wrote;
The Tragic Muse did Honour to the State,
And in a Mirror taught them to be great;
The Comick too, by gentle Means reprov'd;
Lash'd every Vice, and every Vice remov'd:
For tho' the Foible, or the Crime she blam'd,
Smil'd on the Man, and with a Smile reclaim'd.
Thus was the Grecian Stage, the Roman too;
When e'er they wrote, had Virtue in their View:
In this politer age, on British ground,
The sprightly Scenes, with Wit and Sense abound,
The brilliant Stage with vast Applause is crown'd
And Shouts of Joy thro' the whole House resound;
Yet not content to bear so great a Name,
The Muse still labor'd to encrease her Fame;

1. Hornblow, Arthur: "A History of the Theatre in America". Vol.1.p.87.

"Summ'd her Agents quickly to appear,
 'Haste to Virginia's Plains, my Sons, repair!
 The Goddess said, 'Go, confident to find
 An audience sensible, polite and kind.'
 We heard and strait obey'd; from Britain's shore
 These unknown Climes advent'ring to explore:
 For us then, and our Muse, thus low I bend,
 Nor fear to find in each the warmest Friend;
 Each smiling aspect dissipates our Fear,
 We Ne'er can fail of kind Protection here;
 The Stage is ever Wisdom's fav'rite Care;
 Accept our Labours then, approve our Pains,
 Your smiles will please as equal to our Gains;
 And as you all esteem the Darling Muse,
 The gen'rous Plaudit you will not refuse."(1)

Mr. Dunlap gives a different Prologue, which he asserts was written on shipboard for the purpose by Mr. Singleton, and was spoken by Mr. Rigby. Lewis Hallam, Jr., quoted these lines to the author forty years after the occasion. Theatrical historians are divided in their belief concerning the authenticity of these two versions. A memory of forty years is apt to be rather vague, and for this reason it may be that the Prologue given above and definitely appearing in print, as Mr. Hornblow says, is the more probable of the two in question. Mr. Dunlap's version is as follows:

"To this New World, from fam'd Britannia's shore,
 Through bois'trous seas where foaming billows roar,
 The Muse, who Britons charm'd for many an age,
 Now sends her servants forth to tread your stage;
 Britain's own race, though far removed, to show
 Patterns of every virtue they should know.
 Though gloomy minds through ignorance may rail,
 Yet bold examples strike where languid precepts fail.
 The world's a stage where mankind act their parts;
 The stage a world to show their various arts;
 While the soul touch'd by Nature's tenderest laws,
 Has all her passions rous'd in virtue's cause.

1. Hornblow, Arthur: "A History of the Theatre in America". Vol.1.p.85-86.

"Reason we hear, and coolly may approve,
 But all's inactive till the passions move.
 Such is the human mind, so weak, so frail,
 'Reason's her chart, but passion her gale!
 Then raise the gale to waft fair virtue o'er
 The sea of life where reason points the shore.
 But ah! let reason guide the course along,
 Lest passion listening to some siren's song
 Rush on the rocks of vice, where all is lost,
 And shipwreck'd virtue renders up the ghost.
 "Too oft, we own, the stage with dangerous art,
 In wanton scenes has played the siren's part.
 Yet if the muse, unfaithful to her trust,
 Has sometimes strayed from what is pure and just,
 Has she not oft with awful, virtuous rage,
 Struck home at vice, and nobly trod the stage?
 Made tyrants weep, the conscious stand
 And drop the dagger from his trembling hand?
 Then, as you treat a favorite fair's mistake,
 Pray spare her foibles for her virtue's sake.
 And while her chastest scenes are made appear
 (For none but such will find admittance here)
 The Muse's friends, we hope, will join our cause,
 And crown our best endeavors with applause."(1)

It is possible that Mr. Hornblow did not obtain the record of the first performance, and consequently did not know of the existence of the above.

As has been said, Mr. Dunlap gives a different date for the opening of the theatre at Williamsburg. He also gives a different play-bill:
 (2)

"The Merchant of Venice"

Bassanio,	Mr. Rigby.
Antonio,	Clarkson.
Gratiana,	Singleton.
Salanio and Duke,	Herbert.
Salarino and Gobbo,	Winnel.
Launcelot and Tubal,	Hallam.
Shylock,	Malone.
Servant to Portia,	Master Lewis Hallam.
(being his first appearance on any stage).	
Nerissa,	Miss Palmer.
Jessica,(her first appearance on any stage)	Miss Hallam.
Portia,	Mrs. Hallam

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1. Dunlap, William: "The History of the American Stage". p.10.
 2. Ibid. p.8-9.

"Lethe"

Esop,	Mr. Clarkson.
Old Man,	Malone.
Fine Gentleman,	Singleton.
Frenchman,	Rigby.
Charon,	Herbert.
Mercury,	Adcock.
Drunken Man and Tattoo,	Hallam.
John,	Winnel.
Mrs. Tattoo,	Miss Palmer.
Fine Lady,	Mrs. Hallam.

(1)

An amusing anecdote is given by Dunlap in this connection. As we have seen from the bill, this was the first appearance of the young Lewis Hallam. He had only one line to speak, but when confronting the audience he was frightened and after trying in vain to think of his speech, he suddenly burst into tears and ran from the stage. This from the future star of our American Theatre!

From the cast given above and that given by Mr. Hornblow, we are made aware of the discrepancies of the various authors made in connection with the first play-bill and the Prologue. Since critics are divided in agreeing with one or the other of these men, it cannot be stated which is the more probable.

How often performances were given is not known. A letter to the "Maryland Gazette" of November ninth, by a Williamsburg correspondent, casts an interesting light upon one of the performances:

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1. Dunlap, William: "A History of the American Theatre." p.9.
 2. Hornblow, Arthur: "A History of the Theatre in America". Vol. 1.p.87.

"The Emperor of the Cherokee nation with his Empress and their son, the young Prince, attended by several of his warriors and Great Men and their Ladies, were received at the Palace by his Honour the Governor, attended by such of the Council as were in Town, on Thursday, the 9th inst., with all the marks of Courtesy and Friendship, and were that evening entertained at the theatre with The Tragedy of "Othello" and a Pantomine Performance which gave them great surprise, as did the fighting with naked Swords on the Stage, which occasioned the Empress to order some about her to go and prevent them killing one another."

The Hallams remained in Virginia about eleven months, before going north, in 1753. On the way, they played at Annapolis, Marlborough, Piscatawny, and Port Tobacco, important settlements in Maryland. (1) With a testimonial from Governor Dinwiddie recommending the talent and character of the company, Lewis went to the authorities in New York for permission to act. Because Kean had been allowed to act only twelve months for some unknown reason the authorities refused to allow his company to act until September. Mr. Hallam then went ahead with his preparations, tearing down (2) Kean's theatre in Nassau Street and building a new and more elaborate one. The new theatre was opened on the seventeenth of September with the following program:

"By His Excellency's Authority"

By a Company of Comedians from London, at the New Theatre in Nassau Street, the present evening being the 17th of September (1753) will be presented a comedy called

'The Conscious Lovers'

The part of Young Bevil to be performed by Mr. Rigby.

The part of Mr. Sealant to be performed by Mr. Malone.

Sir John Bevil

by Mr. Bell.

Myrtle

by Mr. Clarkson.

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1. Bates, Alfred, Editor: "The Drama". Vol.19. "American Drama". p.18-19.
 2. Hornblow, Arthur: "A History of the Theatre in America". Vol.1.p.9.

Cimberton by Mr. Miller.
Humphrey by Mr. Adcock.
Daniel by Master L. Hallam.
The part of Tom to be performed by Mr. Singleton.
The part of Phillis to be performed by Mrs. Becceley.
Mrs. Sealand by Mrs. Clarkson.
Lucinda by Miss Hallam.
Isabella by Mrs. Rigby.
And the part of Indiana to be performed by Mrs. Hallam.
To which will be added the Ballad Farce called
"Damon and Phillida"

Arcas by Mr. Bell.
Ogon by Mr. Rigby.
Kerydon by Mr. Clarkson.
Cymon by Mr. Miller.
Damon by Mr. Adcock.
Phillida by Mrs. Becceley.

A new occasional prologue to be spoken by Mr. Rigby.

An epilogue (addressed to the ladies) by Mrs. Hallam.

Prices, box 8s. pit 6s. gallery 3s. No persons whatever to be admitted behind the scenes. N.B. Gentlemen and ladies that choose tickets may have them at the new printing office in Bever-street. To begin at 6 o'clock."(1)

New members added to the company were Mr. Bell, Mr. Miller, and Mrs.

Becceley. Mr. and Mrs. Love, and Mr. Hulett had also joined the case. Mr.
(2)

Dunlap gives an interesting paragraph upon the latter;

"The latter was an apprentice to William Hallam of Goodman's Fields, and was sent to the company as a dancer and violin player. He was for many years the only dancing master in New York, and some of us 'old fellows' remember the lessons and the steps taught by this worthy man whose sons were the teachers of succeeding generations, and live in the memories of the middle aged of New York."

During their six months run in New York, Hallam produced
(3)
no fewer than twenty-one plays, a marvellous record for such trying times.
The season closed on the eighteenth of March, 1754, with "The Beggar's

1. Dunlap, William: "A History of the American Theatre." p.13-14.

2. Ibid. p.14.

3. Hornblow, Arthur: "A History of the Theatre in America". Vol.1.p.90-91.

2

3

Opera" and "The Devil to Pay". The series of benefits begin at the end of January and continued until the close of the season. One night's performance had been for the poor, the play being "Love For Love"⁽¹⁾. Appended to the bill for the closing performance was the following notice:

"Lewis Hallam, comedian, intending for Philadelphia, begs the favour of those having any demands upon him to bring in their accounts and receive their money."⁽²⁾

Such an announcement must have been disconcerting to those believers in the theatre as an evil and expensive influence.

Philadelphians were curious to see the London players because of the enthusiastic reports which those who had seen them in New York or elsewhere had brought. Mr. Malone was therefore sent to apply to Governor Hamilton for permission to act in the territory within jurisdiction. Difficulties beset him on all sides, and because he had been promised the parts of Falstaff in "Henry the Fourth" and "The Merry Wives", and of Don Lewis in "Love Makes A Man, or The Fop's Fortune", he did his best.⁽³⁾ At last, however, he was forced to send for Mr. Hallam. The Quakers, and those who sided with them, petitioned the Governor to prohibit stage plays, but they were refused, and Hallam's troupe was granted a license for twenty-four performances on condition that they "offered nothing indecent and immoral", and gave one performance for the benefit of the poor. It was also agreed that the manager would give security for all debts and contracts of the company.⁽⁴⁾

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1. Dunlap, William: "A History of the American Theatre". p.15.
 2. Hornblow, Arthur: "A History of the Theatre in America". Vol.1.p.93.
 3. Same as 1. p.16.
 4. Ibid. p.16-17.

The first performance took place in Mr. William Plumstead's storehouse, with "The Fair Penitent" and "Miss in Her Teen" as the initial repertoire. Mr. Rigby delivered a prologue, perhaps the one previously (1) quoted from Dunlap. An account of the performance says:

"The audience was in the best of spirits, but an unpleasant disturbance occurred when it was discovered that one of the unfriendly opponents occupied a seat in the pit. Instead of being allowed to sit the play through, with the chance of being converted to a more liberal course, he was summarily ejected."

In an epilogue given by Mrs. Hallam, the stage was defended, and she asked:

"If then the soul in
Virtue's cause we move
Why should the friends of
Virtue disapprove?"(2)

Such appeals as this and the favorable reception given the players caused the Governor to extend their license another week.

Among the plays presented in Philadelphia were "The Gamester" by Vanbrugh, "The Careless Husband" by Colley Cibber, and probably several others.

(4)

In the early summer of 1754, William Hallam, the man who planned the American venture a few years previous, visited the New World. The purpose of this visit seems to have been to make Lewis the sole proprietor of the company, because William immediately returned to England and we do not hear of him again.

1. Myers, Gustavus: "Ye Olden Blue Laws". p.216.

2. Ibid. p.216.

3. Hornblow, Arthur: "A History of the Theatre in America". p.95. Vol.1.

4. Dunlap, William: "A History of the American Theatre." p.18.

Lewis Hallam, now proprietor as well as manager, took his
(1)
company to the West Indies, where he died in Jamaica in 1756. On his
decease Hornblow tells us, the company broke up, and only Mrs. Hallam and
(2)
her children were again seen on the American stage.

In this chapter we have seen the formation of the first
company to be organized and sent to America. William Hallam, the Father
of the American Stage, conceived the idea when his theatre at Goodman's
Field no longer was successful financially. Having been left his theatri-
cal property by magnanimous creditors, it was not difficult to arrange for
new fields to conquer. All business arrangements were made before embark-
ing in the "Charming Sally", as well as the decision concerning their
repertoire and the parts to be played.

After practice on shipboard, the London thespians gave a
finished performance of "The Merchant of Venice" and a Farce, either on
September fifth or fifteenth, 1752, at Williamsburg, the capitol of
Virginia. From Williamsburg, after eleven months, the company went north
to New York, via the important settlements in Maryland. This famous
northern city now had a new theatre built on the site of Kean's old theatre
on Nassau Street. The season here was successful, and when enthusiastic
reports spread to the colonists in Philadelphia, a "press agent" in the
person of Mr. Malone was sent to Governor Hamilton to obtain the right
for the company to act there. It was only when Lewis Hallam himself went
to the authorities that the Governor granted his troupe the privilege of
acting for twenty-four performances, with an additional week granted be-

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1. Bates, Alfred, Editor: "The Drama". Vol.19. "American Drama". p.24.
 2. Hornblow, Arthur: "A History of the Theatre in America". Vol.1.p.96-97.

cause of their popularity.

During the summer of 1754 William Hallam came to America. It is believed that the purpose of his visit was to sell or give Lewis his interests in the company. Lewis then took his company to the West Indies, where he died in 1756. None of the company returned to act except Mrs. Hallam and her children.

Chapter V. The American Theatre Under David Douglass.

In 1758, the American theatrical world received a new leader when Mrs. Lewis Hallam married David Douglass. (1) Inconspicuous as an actor, Mr. Douglass was to prove himself a man of great managerial ability, when he and his company played throughout the American colonies before the Revolutionary War, increasing the popularity of the theatre as well as diminishing opposition.

During the company's absence in the West Indies, which welcomed the players, the Nassau Street Theatre in New York was demolished, and it was necessary to erect a new one, when the company under Douglass's leadership went there in 1758. Failing to obtain permission from the magistrates to build this theatre on Cruger's Wharf, the manager was (2) humiliated by a refusal when he applied at last to the authorities.

Much correspondence was necessary in the periodicals of the day to try to convince the people that he had meant no presumption. In Gaine's "Mercury" was placed the following notice:

"Mr. Douglass, who came here with a Company of Comedians, having applied to the Gentlemen in Power for permission to play, has (to his great mortification) met with a positive and absolute denial. He has in vain represented that such are his circumstances and those of the other members of his company that it is impossible for them to move to another place; and tho', in the humblest manner, he begged the Magistrates would indulge him in acting as many Plays as would barely defray the expenses he and the Company have been at in coming to this city, and enable them to proceed to another, he has been unfortunate enough to be eremptorily refused it. As he has

1. Dunlap, William: "A History of the American Theatre". p.18.
2. Ibid. p.19.

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given over all thoughts of acting, he begs leave to inform the Public that in a few days he will open a Histrionic Academy, of which proper notice will be given in this paper."(1)

Mr. Douglas kept insisting that he wished to open this kind of an academy in order to "deliver dissertations on subjects moral, instructive, and entertaining, and to endeavor to speak in public with propriety."⁽²⁾

At length permission was granted for thirteen nights, and the season opened with Rowe's "Jane Shore", on December twenty-eighth, 1758.⁽³⁾ Lewis Hallam, now eighteen years of age, spoke the prologue, and Mrs. Douglass delivered the Epilogue. It is inserted here because of the interesting light it casts upon theatrical opposition of the period:

"Much has been said at this censorious time,
To prove the treading of the stage a crime.
Mistaken zeal, in terms not quite so civil,
Consigns both plays and players to the devil.
Yet wise men own a play well chose may teach
Such useful moral truths as churchmen preach.
May teach the heart another's grief to know,
And melt the soul to salutary wo.
So when the unhappy virtuous fair complains
In Shakspeare's Lee's or Otway's moving strains,
The narrowest hearts expanded wide appear,
And soft compassion drops the pitying tear.
Or would you warn the thoughtless youth to shun
Such dangerous arts as numbers have undone,
A Barnwell's fate can never fail to move,
And strike with shame and terror, lawless love.
See, plunged in ruin, with a virtuous wife,
The Gamester weeps, despairs, and ends his life.
When Cato bleeds he spends his latest breath,
To teach the love of country, strong in death,
With these examples and a thousand more,
Of godlike who lived in times of yore,
The tragic Muse recalls this long-past age,
And brings heroic virtue, living, on the stage.

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1. Hornblow, Arthur: "A History of the Theatre in America". Vol. 1. p. 99-100.
 2. Dunlap, William: "A History of the American Theatre." p. 19.
 3. Quinn, Arthur: "A History of the American Drama From the Beginning to the Civil War." p. 13.

THE [illegible] OF [illegible]

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But when to social gayety inclined
The comic Muse shall feast the cheerful mind,
Fools of all sorts and fops a brainless crew,
To raise your mirth, we'll summon to your view;
Make e'en the coxcomb laugh to see his brother,
And one knave blush with shame to see another,
'Tis magic ground we tread, and at our call
Those sprites that represent you all.

Yet hold-methinks I hear some snarl or cry,
'Pray madam, why so partial-rat-me-why
Don't you do justice on your own sweet sex?
Are there no prudes, coquettes, or jilts to vex?'
Granted - there are. For folly's not confined
To sex, it sways depotic all of human kind.
We frankly own - indeed we may as well -
For every fluttering beau, we find a simpering belle.

But oft, above the pert, the dull, the vain,
The comic Muse exalts her moral strain;
To laugh at folly will not be confined,
But tries to mend as well as please rankind.
So when vile custom by false honor's breath,
For one rash word would doom two friends to death,
Steele's moral Muse the impressive lesson shows,
Teaching the unhallowed tyrant's will t' oppose.
Showing a Bevil, generous as brave,
Too wise to be insensate custom's slave,
Above the fear of death, but not above
The law of God, prescribing peace and love.

Thus human life's our theme - a fruitful field
Of moral themes aplenteous store to yield,-
Sages upheld our art in ancient time,
And to paint nature was not thought a crime;
For if the soul in virtue's cause we move,
The friends of virtue cannot disapprove-
We trust they do not, by the splendid sight
Of sparkling eyes that grace our scenes tonight;
Then bravely dare to assert the taste you've shown,
Nor be ashamed so just a cause to own;
And tell our foes, what Shakspeare said of old
(Our former motto spoke it, I am told),
That here the world in minature you see,
And all mankind are players as well as we."(1)

(2)

During this season "Douglas", by John Howe, was presented. Hornblow speaks of the play as the most famous of the eighteenth century tragedies.

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1. Dunlap, William: "A History of the American Theatre". p.20-21.
 2. Hornblow, Arthur: "A History of the Theatre in America." Vol.1.p.101.

While making arrangements for his company in Philadelphia in 1759, Douglass encountered difficulties. Governor Denny granted him the right to build a theatre, just outside the limits of the city on what (1) was known as "Society Hill". While it was being constructed, the ministerial groups petitioned the legislature to pass a law prohibiting the building of theatres. The Governor was forced to sign it, but fortunately (2) the King's Council was not as prejudiced, and vetoed it. As a result of such opposition, the season was limited from the twenty-fifth of June to (3) the twenty-eighth of December, 1759. It opened with Rowe's "Tamerlane" and five tragedies by Shakespeare were given, while the season ended with "George Barnwell" for the benefit of the college, which wished to buy an organ, and "Hamlet" was given for the Pennsylvania Hospital, which, however, (4) refused to accept the money.

Annapolis was played by the London Company, after the close of the Philadelphia season. Their stay in this city, a short one, - from March third to May twelfth - was notable for the quality and quantity (5) of their repertory. For the first time in our dramatic history we find a printed theatrical criticism. Appearing in the "Maryland Gazette", it reads as follows:

"Critique: Monday last the Theatre in this city was opened when the tragedy of Orphan and Lethe (a dramatic satire) was performed in the presence of his Excellency the Governor to a polite and numerous audience who all expressed their satisfaction. The

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1. Myers, Gustavus: "Ye Olden Blue Laws". p.216-217.
 2. Hornblow, Arthur: "A History of the Theatre in America". Vol.1.p.104.
 3. Quinn, Arthur: "A History of the American Drama from the Beginning to the Civil War". p.14.
 4. Same as 2. p.106.
 5. Ibid. p.106-107.

principal characters both in the play and entertainment were performed with great justice, and the applause which attended the whole representation did less honor to the abilities of the actors than to the state of their auditors. For the amusement and emolument of such of our readers as were not present we here insert the prologue and epilogue, both written by a gentleman of this province whose poetical works have rendered justly admired by all the encouragers of the liberal arts."(1)

Upper Marlborough and Williamsburg were visited in the season of 1760 and (2) 1761, and the American Company then made their first and only visit to New England before the Revolutionary War.

Armed with a recommendation of "Character" from the Governor of Virginia, Douglass and his company presented their repertoire (3) under the guise of "Moral Dialogues". Even the play-bill, says Moses, (4) "masqueraded for the benefit of the town". A typical program used in Newport follows:

"A Newport Playbill"

"King's Arms Tavern, Newport, Rhode Island. On Monday, June 10, at the Public Room of the above Inn, will be delivered a Series of MORAL DIALOGUES, in Five Parts, Depicting the Evil Effects of Jealousy and other Bad Passions, and Proving that Happiness can only Spring from the Pursuit of Virtue. Mr. DOUGLASS will represent a noble and magnificent Moor name Othello, who loves a lady named Desdamona, and after he has married her, harbors (as in too many cases) the dreadful passion of jealousy.

Of Jealousy, our being's bane,
Mark the small cause, and the most dreadful pain.

Mr. ALLYN will depict the character of a specious villain, in the regiment of Othello, who is so base as to hate his commander on

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1. Quinn, Arthur: "A History of the American Drama from the Beginning to the Civil War". From Seilhamer, l.115. p.14.
 2. Ibid. p.14.
 3. Crawford, Mary Caroline: "The Romance of the American Theatre". p.29.
 4. Moses, Montrose: "The American Dramatist". p.26.

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mere suspicion, and to impose on his best friend. Of such character it is to be feared, there are thousands in the world, and the one in question may present to us a salutary warning.

The man that wrongs his master and his friend,
What can he come to but a shameful end?

Mr. HALLAM will delineate a young and thoughtless officer, who is traduced by Mr. Allyn, and getting drunk, loses his situation, and his general's esteem. All young men, whatsoever, take example from Cassio.

The ill effects of drinking would you see?
Be warned and keep from evil company.

Mr. MORRIS will represent an old gentlemen, the father of Desdamano, who is not cruel, or covetous, but is foolish enough to dislike the noble Moor, his son-in-law-, because his face is not white, forgetting that we all spring from one root. Such prejudices are numerous and very wrong.

Fathers beware what sense and love ye lack,
'Tis crime, not color, makes the being black.

Mr. QUELCH will depict a fool, who wished to become a knave, and trusting one gets killed by him. Such is the friendship of rogues - take heed.

When fools would knaves become, how often you'll
Perceive the knave not wiser than the fool.

Mrs. MORRIS will represent a young and virtuous wife, who being wrongfully suspected, gets smothered (in an adjoining room) by her husband.

Reader, attend; and ere thou goest hence
Let fall a tear to hapless innocence.

Mrs. DOUGLASS will be her faithful attendant, who will hold out a good example to all servants, male and female, and to all people in subjection.

Obedience and gratitude
Are things as rare as they are good.

Various other dialogues, too numerous to mention here, will be delivered at night, all adapted to the improvement of the mind and manners. The whole will be repeated Wednesday and Saturday. Tickets, six shillings each, to be had within. Commencement at 7, conclusion at half past ten, in order that every spectator may go home at a sober hour and reflect upon what he has seen before he retires to rest.

God save the King
And long may he sway
East, North, and South,
And fair America."(1)

In the issue of Gaine's "Mercury" for November ninth, it would seem that the American Company had made a favorable impression upon the New Englanders:

"Newport, November 3d. On Friday evening last, the company of comedians finished their performance in this town by enacting the tragedy of Douglass for the benefit of the poor. This second charity is undoubtedly meant as an expression of gratitude for the countenance and favour the town has shown them; and it cannot without an uncommon degree of malevolence be ascribed to an interested or selfish view, because it is given at a time when the company are just leaving the place, and consequently can have neither fear nor hope from the public. In return for this generosity it ought in justice to be told, that the behaviour of the company here has been irreproachable: and with regard to their skill as players, the universal pleasure and satisfaction they have given is their best and most honorable testimony. The character they brought from the governor and gentlemen of Virginia has been fully verified, and therefore we shall run no risk in pronouncing 'that they are capable of entertaining a sensible and polite audience'".(2)

The subterfuge of Mr. Douglass in calling the performances "Moral Dialogues" was evidently undiscovered by the New Englanders. The above advertisement and the account of the impression made there which follows prove the ability of the company to handle with success such difficult situations. It is improbable that he and his troupe would have been received without such "moral" assurances.

From Newport Douglass and his actors went to Providence
(3)
where they encountered greater opposition than before. An act was im-

mediately passed to "Prevent Stage Plays and Other Theatrical entertainments
1. Crawford, Mary Caroline: "The Romance of the American Theatre". p.29-30.
2. Dunlap, William: "A History of the American Theatre". p.23.
3. Same as 1.p.31-32.

within the Colony", the colonists being firm believers that such people were vagrants and caused money to be wasted needlessly. Their antagonism was perhaps unjustified as has been seen in a previous chapter. New England had her reasons for refusing to accept the theatre just as the Southern colonies had theirs for welcoming it. These two seasons in Rhode Island marked the only performance that this company of comedians were allowed to give in New England before the Revolution.

During the stormy New England season, the manager was making the most of an opportunity to build another theatre in New York on Beekman Street. This was the fourth play-house to be erected in this city. The new theatre opened on the eighteenth of November, 1761, with Rowe's "Fair Penitent" and the Farce "Lethe". At this time the American Company consisted of Messrs. Douglass, Lewis Hallam, Jr., Allyn, Morris, Quelch, Tomlinson, Stuart, Reed, Tremain, and Master A. Hallam, and Mesdames Douglass, Morris, Crane, Allyn, and Miss Hallam.

An interesting itemized account of the expenses for a performance of "Othello" is inserted here as an example of the practice which resulted from the cry of opposition that too much expense was involved:

		s.	£	s.	d.
"Box tickets sold at the door,	116 a	8	-	46	8
Pit " " "	146	5	-	36	10
Gallery " "	90	3	-	13	10
Cash received at the doors	36	36	12	6	

		£133	00	6	

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1. Hornblow, Arthur: "A History of the Theatre in America." Vol.1.p.115.
 2. Dunlap, William: "A History of the American Theatre." p.22.
 3. Ibid. p.24.

Charges.

"To candles, 26 lb. of spermaceti at 3s. 6d.			
" 14 lb. tallow 1s.	£ 5	5	
To music, Messrs. Harison & Van Dienva at 36s.	3	12	
To the front door-keeper, 16s. stage door-keeper.			
8s.	1	4	
To the assistants, 13s., bill sticker, 4s.		17	
To the men's dresser, 4s., stage keeper, 32s.,			
drummer, 4s.	2		
To wine in the second act, 2s. 6d.		2	6
To Hugh Gaine, for two sets of bills, advertise-			
ments, and commissions	5	10	

	£ 18	10	6
Balance, £ 114 10s. (1)			

(2)

The profits of this entire season at New York amounted to about \$ 1500.

New York did not see these actors and actresses for about five years, which had been spent in performing at Williamsburg in the winter of 1762 and 1763, and at Charleston from December to May, 1764.

(4)

Douglass then went to England perhaps to recruit new members for his company.

In October, 1766, the famous manager returned, and proceeding to Philadelphia, built the first permanent theatre, the Southwark, in the face of much Quaker opposition. Dunlap mentions a larger theatre than the one built in Southwark the previous year, 1759. His comment upon it leads one to believe that this may be another of the discrepancies which this contemporary historian is sometimes guilty. He says:

"The house erected in 1760 was of sufficient size for the population at that time and long after and was well adapted for theatrical representations. It was of wood

1. Dunlap, William: "A History of the American Theatre." p.25.
2. Quinn, Arthur: "A History of the American Drama From the Beginning to the Civil War." p.15.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid. p.16.
5. Ibid. p.16.

principally and painted red, without outward ornament, and in its appearance no ornament to the city. It was partly burnt some years ago, and is now being used as a distillery. Once pouring out a mingled strain of good and evil, it now dispenses purely evil. Yet distillers are not stigmatised in society."(1)

The company, now definitely aware of the tension about them concerning the relations with the mother country, from this time on refer to themselves only as the American Company. Their London origin no longer was good publicity, especially when the air was heavy with bitterness toward England. Indeed, the company's members were with few exceptions American, many of them having definitely taken up residence here. (2)

The opening bill at the new Southward Theatre included the "Provoked Husband" and a musical "Thomas and Sally". This is the first mention of the latter, and it is not improbable that Douglass brought it from England a short time before. The season from November twelfth to July sixth, 1767, was memorable for the production of "The Prince of Parthia", by Thomas Godfrey, which will be discussed more in detail in a future chapter. (3)

At this time a new leading lady appeared on the theatrical horizon, Miss Margaret Cheer. She attained fame for her excellent ability in acting, and Hornblow comments upon her admirable record of forty-six parts in less than two years. In 1769, she married into the nobility, a brief account of the wedding appearing in the "Pennsylvania Chronicle" of August 28, 1768: (4) (5)

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1. Dunlap, William: "A History of the American Theatre". p.22
 2. Hornblow, Arthur: "A History of the Theatre in America". Vol.1.p.122
 3. Quinn, Arthur: "A History of the American Drama from the Beginning to the Civil War". p.16.
 4. Same as 2. p.122.
 5. Ibid.

" Last week was married in Maryland the Right Honorable Lord Rosehill to Miss Margaret Cheer, a young lady much admired for her theatrical performances."(1)

At the close of the season here, in early summer the company went to New York after an absence of five years. The name of the organization now became Douglass, Hallam, and Henry. The latter was an Irish actor of considerable fame, who had studied under the patronage of the elder Sheridan. He had joined the company during the previous season at Philadelphia.

Many changes had occurred in the company itself as well as in the managership. On the play-bills of the period we find such names as Messrs. Wall, Cheer, Wainwright, Storer, F. Storer, and M. Storer.

On December seventh, 1767, the John's Street Theatre opened with the following program:

"By permission of His Excellency the Governor.
By the American Company.

At the theatre in John Street, this present evening, a comedy called
'THE BEAUX STRATAGEM'

Archer, Mr. Hallam; Ainwell, Mr. Henry; Sullen, Mr. Tomlinson;
Sir C. Freeman, Mr. Malone; Foigard, Mr. Allyn; Gibbet, Mr. Wools;
Scrub, Mr. Wall; Boniface, Mr. Douglass; Dorinda, Miss Hallam;
Lady Bountiful, Mrs. Harman; Cherry, Miss Wainwright; Gipsy, Mrs.
Wall; Mrs. Sullen, Miss Cheer; An occasional epilogue by Mrs.
Douglass.

To conclude with the dramatic satire entitled 'Lethe.'

On the fourteenth, a number of Cherokee Indians went to a performance at this theatre, which Mr. Dunlap describes:

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1. Crawford, Mary Caroline: "The Romance of the American Theatre". p.41.
 2. Hornblow, Arthur: "A History of the Theatre in America". Vol.1.p.128.
 3. Dunlap, William: "A History of the American Theatre". p.29.
 4. Same as 2. p.129.
 5. Same as 3. p.30.

"On the fourteenth of December, nine chiefs of the Cherokee nation attended the theatre. Richard the Third was played for their edification, and the journal remarks that 'They regarded the play with attention, but seemed to express nothing but surprise; the "Oracle" and "Harlequin's Vagaries" drew forth some proofs of their diverted.' Soon after the bills announce that 'The Cherokee chiefs and warriors being desirous of making some return for the friendly reception and civilities they have received in this city, have offered to entertain the public with a war-dance' and 'it is humbly premed that no part of the audience will forget the proper decorum so essential to all public assemblies, particularly on this occasion, as the persons who have condescended to contribute to their entertainment are of rank and consequence in their own country."

Mr. Dunlap, whose anecdotes on the stage of the period are most enlightening despite the handicap of numerable discrepancies which are found in the work of any contemporary historian who cannot view the period as a whole, as a later generation can, casts interesting highlights upon the methods necessary to fill the theatre with play-goers. In the New York season of 1769, which opened on the sixteenth of January, after a few months run in (1) Philadelphia, it was necessary to inveigle attendance, and Dunlap gives us the following information:

"The 17th of March, 'The Busybody and Brave Irishman' were announced to be performed by particular desire of the Grand Knot of the friendly brothers of Saint Patrick. The Charter song by Mr. Wools.

March 28, The Tender Husband and Upholsterer were advertised for 'The entertainment of the R. W. Grand Master, the M.W. and brethren of the ancient and honourable Society of Free and Accepted Masons'. To the bill was annexed the following invitation: 'The Company of all the brethren in town is earnestly requested to meet at Burns at 5 o'clock on the day of performance, and walk from thence in procession to the theatre, where the pits will be reserved for their accommodation". (2)

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1. Hornblow, Arthur: "A History of the Theatre in America". Vol.1.p.132.
 2. Dunlap, William: "A History of the American Theatre." p.31.

Any arrangement which would bring patrons was offered without discrimination. This is another example of the resourcefulness of Douglass as a manager.

Albany for the first time was the scene of the American Company's next venture. Performing at the Hospital, they gave "Venice Preserved" and a farce as their first offering, on July third.⁽¹⁾

Opposition had abated but little in the North, but the Southern hospitality seems to have become more extensive, for we hear from Hornblow that a company known as "The New Virginia Company" was occasionally playing in the South in 1768.⁽²⁾

Douglass seemed immune to difficulties arising from opposition, however, and again opened the Southwark Theatre on the eighth of November, the same year. Such plays as "The Tempest", "The Good-Natured Man", and Shirley's "Edward the Black Prince" were produced, until the season closed in June, 1770. There followed a season at Annapolis and Williamsburg, and at the latter Miss Hallam attained great fame for her talents.⁽³⁾⁽⁴⁾⁽⁵⁾

It is believed that the almost complete silence of the records of this period would indicate that Mr. Douglass went to Jamaica, while Mr. Henry went to London for new talent.⁽⁶⁾

While in Annapolis to dedicate the theatre built for Douglass by popular subscription, scenery is for the first time particularly announced. The opening performance took place on the first of September,

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1. Dunlap, William: "A History of the American Theatre". p.31.
 2. Hornblow, Arthur: "A History of the Theatre in America". Vol.1.p.136.
 3. Ibid. p.136-137.
 4. Quinn, Arthur: "A History of the American Drama from the Beginning to the Civil War". p.30.
 5. Same as 2. p.138.
 6. Ibid.

with "A Word to the Wise", by Hugh Kelley. The details of the bill stated that the scenes were painted by Mr. Richards of London, and that "places in the boxes (were) to be had at the theatre, where a book is kept for the purpose."⁽¹⁾ This is the first mention made of a box-book.

New York again greeted the thespians, however diffidently, on the fourteenth of April, 1773, when they opened at the John Street Theatre with Murphy's "The Way to Keep Him" and "Catherine and Petruchio".⁽²⁾ The season ended on August fifth with Goldsmith's immortal comedy, "She Stoops To Conquer".⁽³⁾ Dunlap remarks that the bills of this series of performances referred to "gentlemen" appearing in the various parts. He further narrates that on the twenty-sixth of July, "George Barnwell" and "The Padlock" were given to raise funds for the building of a new hospital. The following N.B. was appended to the play-bill:

"It is hoped that all who are charitable disposed, or wish well to so laudable and useful an undertaking, will countenance this play with their presence, or otherwise contribute their mite towards so good a work as providing a receptacle for the sick and needy. It is hoped by the friends of the Hospital, that the moral of the play to be acted will have some influence with those who are otherwise no friends to the theatre."

In Charleston, South Carolina, the most elaborate of the theatres yet built in the colonies was erected, and the repertoire given in it was excellent, including twenty-seven plays, operas, and farces. For the first time it became "The Thing" for ladies to attend the theatre.⁽⁵⁾

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1. Dunlap, William: "A History of the American Theatre". p.32.
 2. Hornblow, Arthur: "A History of the Theatre in America". Vol.1.p.145.
 3. Ibid. p. 146.
 4. Same as 1.p.33.
 5. Quinn, Arthur: "A History of the American Drama From the Beginning to the Civil War". p.32

In 1774, Douglass went to Philadelphia with plans to improve his company. While there, the company was saddened by the death of Mrs.

(1)

Douglass, who had come over on the "Charming Sally" as Mrs. Hallam.

She was the mother of Mrs. Mattocks and of Lewis Hallam Junior. There seems to be some question as to whether or not she was the mother of Miss Hallam, who was made the heroine of John Esten Cooke's novel, "The Virginia Comedians".

The approach of the Revolution necessarily caused a change of plans. On February second, Doughlass departed for the West Indies, with

(2)

some members of the company, Miss and Mr. Hallam and Wools went to London, and the remainder went to New York, intending to open in the fall, but the closing of the theatres prevented them, and no doubt they, too, went to

(3)

the West Indies.

Under this great theatrical manager before the Revolution, the American Company toured the colonies. David Douglass, who ascended the theatrical throne by his marriage to Mrs. Hallam in 1758, was a man of small acting ability and great managerial qualities. The company, under his direction, did much to strengthen the theatre in America. The closing of the play-houses by the Continental Congress did not permanently harm acting and actors, because we again meet various members of the company in post-war days. We are told that Lewis and Henry returned to the States but Douglass became a British Judge in Jamaica.

1. Dunlap, William: "A History of the American Theatre". p.34.

2. Quinn, Arthur: "A History of the American Drama From the Beginning to the Civil War." p.32.

3. Same as 1. p.35.

Chapter VI. "The Prince of Parthia" and Other Early Plays.

A. "The Prince of Parthia."

The first definitely American play by an American author to be performed on the American stage by professional actors was Thomas Godfrey's "The Prince of Parthia". It was the forerunner of the many college productions which have been so popular throughout the years.

The College of Philadelphia, in which young Godfrey studied, was not a stranger to the drama. It frequently gave productions with amateur casts, dramatizing not only plays, but odes and dialogues as well. Young Godfrey was closely associated with these, and decided to write an actable play, which he purposed to have the American Company produce. He had evidently seen them perform in Philadelphia in 1754 and 1756-7, and greatly admired their acting ability.

The son of Thomas Godfrey, the inventor of the sea-quadrant, the author was born on December fourth, 1736, in Philadelphia. Educated at an English Grammar school in the city, he later came to the attention of Provost William Smith, under whose direction he continued his studies. He was a friend of Nathaniel Evans, John Green the portrait painter, and Francis Hopkinson. Later Provost Smith obtained for his protegee a commission in the Pennsylvania militia, in May, 1758. While at Fort Henry he was made a lieutenant, and in 1759 he went to Wilmington, North Carolina,

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1. Quinn, Arthur: "A History of the American Drama from the Beginning to the Civil War". p.4
 2. Ibid. p.4.
 3. Ibid. p.18
 4. Quinn, Arthur: "Representative American Plays". p.3
 5. Ibid.
 6. Same as 1. p.17.
 7. Moses. Montrose: "The American Dramatist". p.32.
 8. Same as 1. p.17.

where he became a factor. In this town, on August third, 1763, he died of
(1)
fever. He did not live to see his tragedy either in print or on the stage.

Young Godfrey must have been contemplating the production of his play before he attempted to have it staged by the Douglass Company. It reached them too late to be played, because the season closed on the twenty-eighth of December, 1759.

In 1765, two years after the author's death, "The Prince of
(2)
Parthia" was published with Godfrey's poems, by Nathaniel Evans. The advertisement for the performance of the play appeared in "The Pennsylvania Journal and the Weekly Advertiser" for April twenty-third, 1767. It was
(3)
as follows:

" BY AUTHORITY
Never performed Before.
By the American Company,
At the New Theatre, in Southwark,
on Friday, the Twenty-fourth of April, will be
presented, A Tragedy written by the late ingenious
Mr. Thomas Godfrey, of this city, called the
PRINCE OF PARTHIA
The Principal Characters by Mr. Hallam, Mr.
Douglass, Mr. Wall, Mr. Morris
Mr. Allyn. Mr. Tomlinson, Mr.
Broadbelt, Mr. Greville, Mrs.
Douglass, Mrs. Morris, Miss
Wainwright, and Miss Cheer.
To which will be added, "A Ballad Opera", called
THE CONTRIVANCES.

To begin exactly at Seven o'clock. Vivand Rex & Regina."

No records have been found to indicate a second dramatization, nor have we
(4)
a report of its reception.

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1. Quinn, Arthur: "A History of the American Drama From the beginning to the Civil War." p.17.23.
 2. Quinn, Arthur: "Representative American Plays". p.3.
 3. Ibid. p.3-4.
 4. Same as 1. p.17.

This tragedy revealed the author's knowledge of the Elizabethan (1) writers, and of such men as Dryden, Ambrose Philips, and Nicholas Rowe. To Shakespeare, Godfrey was most indebted. A few examples of the close similarity between this play and those of Shakespeare are given here in order to prove the scholarliness of the author's background, as well as the assimilation, of the important scenes and speeches in the plays of the master. The following quotation is from "Julius Caesar". Notice the similarity of the second from "The Prince of Parthia":

"For once, upon a raw and gusty day,
The troubled Tiber chafing with her shores,
Caesar said to me 'Darest thou, Cassius, now
Leap in with me into this angry flood,
And swim to yonder point?' Upon the word
Accoutred as I was, I plunged in
And bade him follow; so indeed he did.
The torrent roar'd, and we did buffet it
With lusty sinews, throwing it aside
And stemming it with hearts of controversy;
But ere we could arrive the point proposed,
Caesar cried 'Help me, Cassius, or I sink!'
I, as Aeneas, our great ancestor,
Did from the flames of Troy upon his shoulder
The old Anchises bear, so from the waves of Tiber
Did I the tired Caesar."(2)

" 'Twas summer last, as we
Were bathing in Euphrates' flood, Vardanes
Proud of strength would seek the further shore;
But ere he the mid-stream gain'd, a poignant pain
Shot thro' his well-strung nerves, contracting all,
And the stiff joints refus'd their wonted aid.
Loudly he cried for help, Arcasses heard,
And thro' the swelling waves he rushed to save

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1. Quinn, Arthur: "A History of the American Drama From the Beginning to the Civil War". p.17.
 2. "Julius Caesar". Act 1, Scene 11.

His drowning Brother, and gave him life,
And for the boon the Ingrate pays him hate."(1)

There is a reminiscence of Iago's complaint against Othello in the lines which follow Shakespeare's in "Othello":

"Three great ones of the city,
In personal suit to make me his lieutenant,
Off-capp'd to him: and, but the faith of man,
I know my price, I am worth no worse a place:

And in conclusion,
Nonsuits my meditators; for "Certes", says he,
' I have already chose my officer'.
And what was he?
Forsooth, a great arithmetician,
One Michael Cassio, a Florentine."

But he, sir, had the election:
And I, of whom his eyes had seen the proof
At Rhodes, at Cyprus and on the grounds
Christian and heathen, must be-lee'd and calm'd
By debtor and creditor: this counter-caster,
He, in good time, must his lieutenant be, (2)
And I - God bless the mark! - his Moorship's ancient."

"I hail him? By our glorious shing God,
I'd sooner lose my speech, and all my days
In silence rest, conversing with my thoughts,
Than hail Arcases.

You may command my service.
I'm happy to obey. Of late your Brother
Delights in hind'ring my advancement,
And ev'ry boaster's rais'd above my merit,
Barzaphernes alone commands his ear,
His oracle in all."(3)

The same theme in the speech of Cordelia to Lear is found in that of Vardanes in "The Prince of Parthia".

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1. "The Prince of Parthia". Act 1, Scene 1.
 2. "Othello". Act 1, Scene 1.
 3. Same as 1. Act 1. Scene 11.

"Unhappy that I am, I cannot heave
My heart into my mouth: I love your majesty
According to my bond; nor more nor less."(1)

"Doubt not my love, tho' I lack eloquence,
To dress my sentiments and catch the ear,
Tho' plain my manners, and my language rude,
My honest heart disdains to wear disguise,
Then think not I am slothful in the race,
Or, that my Brother springs before my Love."(2)

The description of the storm in Act 11, Scene 11, in "The Prince of Parthia" is similar to that in "Julius Caesar", Act 1, Scene 111. Godfrey, however, seems more concerned with its effects upon Nature, while Shakespeare dwells upon its effect upon people.

Perhaps the most definite influence of Shakespeare upon this young American playwright, is in the scene which Lysias and Vardanes listen unseen to Eethas. It is similar to the famous eavesdropping scene in "Hamlet", when Polonius hides behind the arras to overhear Hamlet and the Queen.

It is a credit to young Godfrey that he made use of what he learned, to improve his own ideas of plot, character, language, and expression. The play itself, written in blank verse, deals with the tragic culmination of the love of Arsaces and Evanthe, and is concerned with the elemental passions of love, jealousy, revenge, and hate.

It may be said that this play is not as important as it might have been because it does not deal with an American subject. The

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1. "King Lear". Act 1, Scene 1.
 2. "The Prince of Parthia". Act 1, Scene 1V.
 3. Ibid. Act 11, Scene 1V-V111.
 4. "Hamlet". Act 111, Scene 1V.

answer to this opinion is that to appreciate properly the play, one must consider the period in which it was written and the scholarly culture which it reveals. In a previous chapter we have considered the English stage of the period, and many of the famous players were still acting at this time. The plays being produced by the Douglass Company were also being performed in England.

There are indications that Thomas Godfrey might have become a great theatrical figure in America had he not died at such an early age. We honor his play, "The Prince of Parthia", as the first play by an American to be professionally produced on the American Stage. He is sometimes honored with the title of "Father of the American Drama".

B. Other Early American Plays.

There were other American plays besides "The Prince of Parthia" but they are not considered as important as this famous drama. Mr. Quinn, to whom one must inevitably turn for a scholarly account of the items of importance in our early theatre, has again given us an excellent account of independent performances, especially in the colleges.

(1)

Mr. Moses, another eminent critic, mentions the performances of "Roman Father" at Harvard on the twenty-second of July, 1758, and he also refers to a dramatization of "The Recruiting Officer" on the twentieth of June, the following year.

"An Exercise consisting of a Dialogue and Ode Sacred to the Memory of His late Gracious Majesty, George II," was given at the Commencement of the College of Philadelphia, on May twenty-third, 1761.

Provost William Smith was the author of the Dialogue, while Francis Hopkinson wrote the Ode. The following year a similar performance was given in

(3)

honor of the accession of George III. Nathaniel Evans, the future editor of the works of Thomas Godfrey, wrote a piece in honor of the Treaty of Paris, 1763. Princeton, as well as other colleges, gave similar performances on various occasions.

(5)

"The Paxton Boyd", printed anonymously in 1764, and Robert Roger's "Ponteach" were two plays written outside the colleges.

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1. Moses, Montrose: "The American Dramatist". p.30.
 2. Quinn, Arthur: "A History of the American Drama From the Beginning to the Civil War." p.27.
 3. Ibid.
 4. Ibid.
 5. Ibid. p.28.
 6. Ibid.

The latter was published in 1766, and is known as our first problem play. The theme concerns the treatment of the Indians by the white men, and is therefore an American play in subject as well as in authorship.

(1)

Because "The Disappointment" was judged unfit to be given, it lost the honor accorded Godfrey's play, performed four days after its banned opening.

To the colleges the theatre owes a debt of gratitude for fostering plays and playwrights. To the College of Philadelphia in particular is due the honor of preparing our first great American playwright for his gift to our theatre, "The Prince of Parthia". Other plays were written, some of which were produced by amateurs, and some of which dealt with American subjects. None of these can claim to be a rival of the young Thomas Godfrey's play. In it we find scholarliness, poetic ability, dramatic insight, and universal appeal. It is indeed worthy of the honor which is accorded it by our theatrical historians.

1. Quinn, Arthur: "A History of the American Drama From the Beginning to the Civil War." p.27.

Chapter VII. The Closing of the Theatres By the Continental Congress.

The plans of the American Company to open in New York in the fall of 1774, as we have seen in a previous chapter, were not executed because of the ordinance passed by the Continental Congress in Philadelphia. The patriots who were gathered at the Congress saw in the company of English players a danger to the cause of American liberty. Therefore, on October (1)
20, 1774, the following resolution was passed:

"We will, in our several stations, encourage frugality, economy and industry, and promote agriculture, arts, and manufactures of the country, especially that of wool; and will discountenance and discourage every species of extravagance and dissipation, especially all horse-racing, and all kinds of gaming, cock-fighting, exhibitions of shows, plays, and other expensive diversions and entertainments."

This act of Congress was made known to Mr. Douglass in a letter from Peyton Randolph, the president, and although Congress had no real power to enforce the law, the colonies respected and upheld its authority. It therefore became necessary for the company of actors to depart for the West Indies, and they left the country on February second, 1775.

With the departure of Mr. Douglass and his company, the first period of the American theatre came to an end, closed by the ordinance of the Continental Congress.

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1. Quinn, Arthur: "A History of the American Drama From the Beginning to the Civil War". p.32. From "Journals of the Continental Congress 1774-1789. Edited from the Original Records in the Library of Congress", by Worthington Chauncey Ford, Chief, Division of U.S. 1778 Wash. 1904.

Chapter VIII. Conclusion.

The colonial theatre in America was beset with many difficulties. Economical, religious, and social prejudices interfered with its growth as a permanent institution in the early days of our country. New England regarded the players as vagrants and passed severe laws against them, while the more hospitable Southern states welcomed the artists with cordiality.

The literary dependence of America upon the mother country delayed the writing of an American play to be presented to an American audience by professional players until the young Philadelphian, Thomas Godfrey, wrote "The Prince of Parthia" which was produced in 1767. Though not American in subject, it was well worthy of the position of prominence accorded it by theatrical historians.

To the history of dramatic performances in America was recently contributed a newly discovered play, four centuries old, which its finder, Dr. Castaneda of the University of Texas, believes to have been written by Father Motolinia, an author of note at the time of Cortes and Montezuma. If proved authentic, this play will ante-date any performance given by authorities as the first American play to be written.

Arthur Quinn, to whose scholarly book, "A History of the American Drama From the Beginning to the Civil War", frequent reference is made here, mentions 1606 as the date of the dramatic presentation of "The Theatre of Neptune" in New France, by Marc Lescarbot, and believes it to be the first play. The recently discovered drama mentioned above would naturally disprove this statement, as would the performance of a play

by Captain Far Fan on the banks of the Rio Grande, a few years before the performance of Lescarbot's play at Port Royal.

Mention has been made to a few performances of which we have little knowledge, before the Murray-Kean players dramatized their repertoire in Philadelphia, in 1749. Of these, William Aston is the most outstanding personality. He was made famous by his supposed performance in New York, and his varied career, told in the preface of his play, "The Fool's Opera".

The Murray-Kean players dramatized their repertory in the colonies before the coming of the Hallams in 1752, when they are said to have continued as an organization for many years, although we do not hear of them again.

The famous American Company was the most prominent organization for the next twenty-two years. A company was organized in London under the direction of William and Lewis Hallam. Sailing on the "Charming Sally", the London thespians landed at Yorktown, Virginia, in June, 1752. Their courage in the colonies despite such great opposition, was undaunted.

At the death of Lewis Hallam in Jamaica, Mrs. Hallam married David Douglass, an average actor but an excellent manager. Under his guidance the company even invaded New England, despite the prejudices, and new theatres were constantly being built in an effort to make the drama more secure in the New World.

Under the direction of Mr. Douglass, the company produced the first American play at the Wouthwark Theatre in Philadelphia on April twenty-fourth, 1767. The author, Thomas Godfrey, had been educated under

the patronage of Provost Willaim Smith of the College of Philadelphia, and at this institution of learning the boy became acquainted with the dramatic presentations of the students. No doubt he had the Douglass Company in mind when he wrote his play, for they acted in the city when he was there at college.

"The Prince of Parthia" is said by critics who have really studied it to be worthy of the distinction accorded it. Other plays were written, it is true, but none had the intellectual and dramatic power of production that are to be found in young Godfrey's play.

The first period of dramatic history was closed by an ordinance which the Continental Congress passed. On February second, 1774, it was necessary for David Douglass and his company to leave America, some going to the West Indies and some eventually to London.

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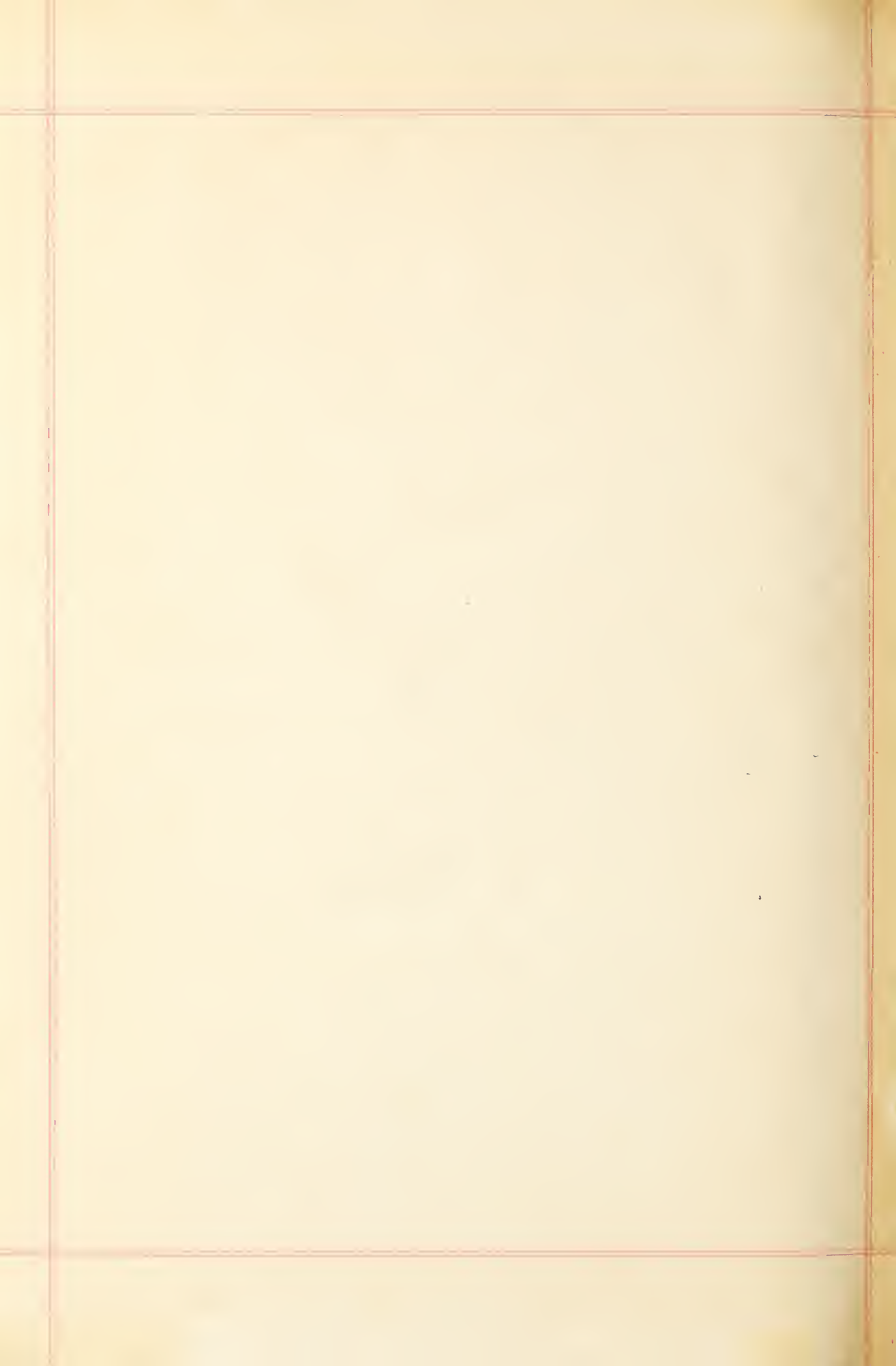
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